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EU has reached breaking point in Ukraine: Borrell

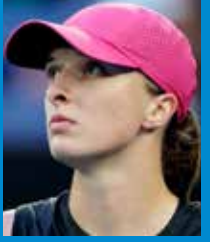
Detailed News On Page-07

Foreigners to stay away from protests

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Iga Swiatek suspended for 1 month

Detailed News On Page-06



As EASA ban lifted

PIA to resume flights to Europe

"I am grateful to European Commission and EASA for conducting a transparent process," says aviation minister

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) has lifted ban on the flights of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) flights to Europe after a gap of nearly four years, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said on Friday. Making an announcement via an X post on Friday, Asif — who also holds portfolio of aviation minister — wrote: "It is a momentous day to announce that the European Commission and the EASA have lifted the suspension on PIA flights to Europe."

"Not only this, TCO [Third Country Operators] authorisation has also been issued to the second Pakistani airline — Airblue Limited," he added. "It is made possible due to the complete focus of Aviation Ministry to strengthen PCAA [Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority] and ensure safety oversight in line with ICAO [International Civil Aviation Organization] standards." Giving credit to the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government, Asif said: "Our government has taken significant measures to strengthen PCAA including enactment of PCAA Act, smooth segregation of regulator and service providers, appointment of professional leadership and training to build the capacity." He thanked the European Commission and the EASA for conducting a transparent process and our commitment to ensure aviation safety in Pakistan.

The European authorities had initially imposed a ban on the operation of Pakistani airlines in July 2020 for six months after the then aviation minister Ghulam Sarwar revealed that pilots possessed "fake" licences. Since then, the safety agency kept extending the ban on PIA flights to fly to the bloc, citing concerns about "Pakistan's ability to ensure compliance with international aviation standards at all times". The ban was a big blow to the airline, which was already under scrutiny across the world due to uncovered pitfalls within Pakistan's aviation industry. The startling revelations came as Sarwar presented the interim report on the probe into the PIA PK-8303 crash that resulted in the deaths of 85 passengers after the plane crashed in Karachi on May 22, 2020. Following the report, the International Air Transport Association (IATA)

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Khunjerab borderclosed for 4 months

Border expected to reopen on April 1, 2025

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Khunjerab border, a vital land link between Pakistan and China, has been officially closed for all public traffic, trade, and tourism. The route has been closed by both sides for the next four months under a bilateral agreement. The closure, effective from November 30, will remain in place until March 30, 2025, as both countries prepare for harsh winter conditions in the region. Situated at an altitude of approximately 15,500 feet above sea level, the Khunjerab Pass experiences heavy snowfall and extreme weather during winter, making transportation and trade activities challenging. As per a mutual agreement, the Khunjerab border operates seasonally, opening annually from April 1 to November 30 to facilitate trade, tourism, and public traffic. This year, the border was closed a day earlier due to regular weekend holidays on Saturday and Sunday. The border is expected to reopen on April 1, 2025.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a high level meeting regarding law and order. — DNA

DPM Dar to visit Iran on Monday

Ishaq Dar will reiterate Pakistan's concerns over hostilities in the Middle East

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar will pay a two-day official visit to Mashhad, Iran from Monday to attend the 28th meeting of the Council of Ministers of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). In his address at the meeting, the Deputy Prime Minister will reiterate Pakistan's commitment to the ECO charter and highlight the potential of greater connectivity in the region through development of rail and road networks, liberalization of visa regimes and simplification of border procedures. Ishaq Dar will also

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Petrol, diesel prices may rise

Projected price hike to result from modest increase in international prices over past 12 days

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Petrol prices are expected to rise by Rs3 per litre and diesel by Rs2.87 per litre starting December 1 for the next fortnight, due to a modest increase in international prices over the past 12 days. However, officials are expecting a decline in POL prices in the global markets from Thursday or Friday on account of the Israel-Hezbollah ceasefire; hence, no change in the POL prices. Brent crude settled 2 cents higher at \$72.83 a barrel while US West Texas Intermediate crude slipped 5 cents to \$68.72.

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Dubs PTI as 'terrorists' PM decides to establish federal Anti-Riots Force

"This is not a political party but a fitna [mischief]," says Premier Shehbaz

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Terming the PTI a "fitna" [mischief] in connection with its recent "do-or-die" protest, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has lashed out at the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government for "using state resources for launching an onslaught" on the federal capital during its recent three-day protest. "This is not a political party but a fitna [mischief] and a group of terrorists," the premier said while directing to lodge cases against such "groups". The prime minister made the remarks while addressing a high-level meeting on law and order situation in the country. Slamming the embattled PTI — whose government was toppled via a no-confidence motion in April 2022 — the premier said that it was the "fourth invasion" of the capital. Referring to PTI's 126-day sit-in in Islamabad, the PM said: "No one could have even

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Hafiz Naeem demands Naqvi's resignation

Says, Govt wants to turn Pakistan into no-go area for political workers

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman, has called for the resignation of Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and the formation of a trusted judicial commission to investigate the use of force against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) protesters. In a press conference in Lahore, Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman said

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Rebel groups launch attacks on Aleppo city

Syria's army says its forces 'continue to repel the major offensive launched by armed terrorist groups' on Aleppo city

FOREIGN DESK

DAMASCUS: At least four people have been killed as rebel groups launched attacks on Aleppo for the first time in years, Syrian state media reported, as the rebel forces ramped up their assault on government-held positions in the country's northwest. The rebels launched a ground attack on the city of Aleppo after blowing up two car bombs on Friday, and were clashing with government forces on the city's western edge, according to a Syria war monitor and fighters. The Turkish state news agency Anadolu reported that the armed groups had entered Aleppo city centre, without providing further details. The Syrian army said on Friday it repelled a major offensive

on the city. "Our forces continue to repel the major offensive launched by armed terrorist groups," the army said in a statement, adding that it was "able to retake control of certain positions". Earlier, four civilians including two students were killed when rebel groups shelled a building housing university students on Friday, the state news agency SANA reported. Rebels led by the Hay'atTahrir al-Shams armed group on Wednesday launched an offensive, capturing a dozen towns and villages in the north-western province of Aleppo. The assault is the most intense fighting in northwestern Syria since 2020, when government forces seized areas previously controlled by opposition fighters, and has come after

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Briefs

CJP calls JPC meeting on Dec 6

Agenda includes proposed inclusion of Justice Shahid Bilal in constitutional bench

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) YahyaAfridi called a meeting of the Judicial Commission on Dec 6 to deliberate on several key judicial appointments. The agenda includes the proposed inclusion of Justice Shahid Bilal in the constitutional bench, a development prompted by the need to fill a vacancy created by the absence of Justice Ayesha Malik in cases involving special courts. Moreover, the commission will review nominations for judicial appointments in the Peshawar High Court and Sindh High Court in the same meeting.

Legal team restricted to meet Imran

Will move petition in IHC tomorrow: Faisal Chaudhry

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: PTI Lawyer Faisal Chaudhry has said that legal team was not allowed to meet PTI founder Imran Khan by Adiala Jail administration on Friday, adding that PTI will move Islamabad High Court against the jail admin. Talking to media outside Adiala Jail Rawalpindi, Faisal Chaudhry said jail administration showed them a notification, according to which the PTI founder is in police custody.

Holiday Notice

The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on Saturday on account of weekly off therefore there will be no newspaper on Sunday. — Editor

PTI to lodge FIR against PM

PTI confirms 12 deaths in Islamabad protest

Omar Ayub and Waqas Akram Sheikh also demanded for the judicial inquiry of use of firearms at D-Chowk

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has confirmed that at least 12 individuals have died during the Islamabad protest, following earlier claims of a significant death toll. Speaking at a press conference with Opposition Leader Omar Ayub, PTI's central spokesperson, WaqasAkram Sheikh, described the government's actions as unprecedented in Pakistan's history of protests. He alleged that reporting journalists about the fatalities during the Islamabad protest have been imprisoned, and that many others remain missing with no information about their whereabouts. He revealed that while the police are providing some figures, PTI has also gathered its own data on the arrests. "Twelve individuals have died during the protest," Sheikh confirmed. "The actual number is higher, but we are sharing only the confirmed figures with the media." He added that the bodies of the deceased were withheld for three days before being returned to their families. "The government is attempting to conceal both the bodies and evidence, but these things cannot be hidden more." During the press conference, Sheikh also criticised the government for demanding names and

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CM Gandapur denies rift with Bushra Bibi

"Reports suggesting any discord are purely fabricated and part of a smear campaign," says chief minister

STAFF REPORT

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has rejected reports of any differences between him and Bushra Bibi, calling them mere propaganda. Addressing concerns in a statement, he reaffirmed that their relationship remains strong, and there is no discord between them. The chief minister emphasised that the primary goal for him and his supporters is the release of the founder of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), adding that the cases against them are baseless. "There are no differences between Bushra Bibi and myself," said CM Gandapur in Peshawar. He further explained, "Reports suggesting

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Kurram death toll jumps to 122 after 12 more killed in clashes

Ceasefire fails as violence persists, disrupting daily life and halting cross-border trade

MONITORING DESK

KURRAM: Firing incidents in various areas of District Kurram have claimed 12 more lives and left 17 injured on the ninth day of ongoing tribal clashes, police said on Friday. Despite a recent ceasefire agreement, violence persists, bringing the total death toll to 122 and the number of injured to 168. According to the district administration, the main Peshawar-Parachinar highway remains closed for the eighth consecutive day, disrupting daily life and trade activities. The Deputy Commissioner of Kurram, JavedullahMehsud, confirmed that the road closure has also halted trade at the Kharlachi border with Afghanistan, further exacerbating the economic impact on the region. Additionally, due to the tense situation, internet and mobile phone services have been suspended, causing severe difficulties for residents, limiting their access to communication and essential services. On Thursday, the death toll in the clashes had reached 107, with five additional fatalities and nine injuries reported despite claims of a ceasefire deal. A 10-day truce was brokered earlier in the week, but intermittent violence has rendered

ATC sends 4185 PTI workers on physical remand

A total of 5,971 accused workers were presented in the Anti-Terrorism Court

COURT REPORTER

RAWALPINDI: An anti-terrorism court has approved a 5 to 7-day physical remand for 4185 arrested Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) workers. The court hearing, conducted by Judge Amjad Ali Shah, involved the presentation of a total of 5971 workers from various police stations. PTI lawyers appeared in court on behalf of the detained individuals, Express News reported. Out of the total, 749 arrested individuals were sent on a 14-day judicial remand to Adiala Jail, while 37 workers, including a woman, were released after being discharged

by the court. The court ordered that the individuals on physical remand be presented again on December 5, while those on judicial remand are to appear on December 12. Meanwhile, 23 cases related to the protests on November 24 have been registered in 16 police stations across the Rawalpindi division. The highest number of cases were filed in police stations in Attock district, including Bahter, Hazro, Hassan Abdal, and Fateh Jang. Earlier, Islamabad's security forces have arrested a total of 954 protesters over the past three days, with 610 arrests made on Tuesday alone, following the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) protests in the capital. The police also seized more than 200 vehicles and 39 firearms, including Kalashnikovs and 12-bore guns, from the protesters. During the clashes, 71 people were injured, including 52 law enforcement officers.

it ineffective. The recent episode of clashes began eight days ago with ambushes on two separate convoys under police escort, resulting in 52 deaths on November 21. Since then, violence between the warring factions has escalated, with police struggling to maintain control. The main highway closure has not only disrupted local transportation but also caused a complete suspension of trade with Afghanistan, particularly at the Kharlachi border. Meanwhile, the district administration is working to enforce the ceasefire. Deputy Commissioner JavedullahMehsud reported that efforts are underway, with a jirga of elders from Hangu, Orakzai, and Kohat engaging both sides to secure a truce. "The parties have agreed to the ceasefire, and steps are being taken to stop clashes," he said. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan recorded 79 deaths in the region between July and October this year, highlighting the persistent instability. Previous efforts to mediate peace, including a seven-day truce brokered by provincial officials earlier this month, have failed to hold. A high-powered delegation, including KP Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry and IGP Akhtar Hayat Gandapur, had also negotiated a ceasefire last weekend, but violence resumed shortly afterward.

Ethiopia, Pak forging coop for holding single country exhibition

Ambassador Dr. Jemal Beker noted the growing bilateral cooperation in various areas such as finance, trade, culture, aviation, science and technology especially after the opening the Ethiopian Mission in Islamabad

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on Friday decided to expand the bilateral cooperation for holding a successful Single Country Exhibition in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia next year by ensuring a large number of traders from both the sides. Pakistani handicrafts The decision to this effect was taken during a meeting between H.E. Dr. Jemal Beker Abdula, Special Envoy and Ambassador Extraordinary of the FDR Ethiopia to

long standing brotherly relations. Ambassador Dr. Jemal Beker noted the growing bilateral cooperation in various areas such as finance, trade, culture, aviation, science and technology especially after the opening the Ethiopian Mission in Islamabad. He said the bilateral relations are on upward trajectory, citing recently signed Memoranda of Understanding between the two nations in the areas of business, trade, investment, aviation, science and technology, start of the Ethiopian Airlines operations in Karachi, and exchange of delegations from business, trade, aviation, education, health and cultural sectors. The Ambassador briefed the Minisr about the Home Grown Economic Re-

is a gateway to Africa which is a huge market of more than 1.4 billion population, he said while underscoring the significance of the Single Country Exhibition in Addis Ababa which would not only connect the Pakistani traders with the Ethiopian counterparts but also with the African market. On the other hand, the Minister said the Ministry of Commerce, and the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan is making all the necessary preparation regarding the Single Country Exhibition in Addis Ababa. He said the Government of Pakistan is committed to Look Africa and Engage Africa Policy and has been taking all possible steps



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti giving Pink Scooties to student of Post Graduate Girls College.

OPC Punjab to help solve expats' problems

DNA

LAHORE :The purpose of Overseas Pakistanis Commission (OPC) Punjab is to further strengthen relationship between the Punjab government and overseas Pakistanis with an aim to provide easy and effective solutions to their problems. This was stated by OPC Vice Chairperson Barister Amjad Malik in a statement, issued here on Friday. He said that door of the OPC is the office of overseas Pakistanis are always open for overseas Pakistanis as their welfare is the government's top priority. He added that overseas Pakistanis can always receive assistance at this office regarding the protection of their rights, legal matters, property issues, and other related concerns. Both the Governments of Pakistan and Punjab are very serious about providing better services to their foreign nationals and addressing their issues on a priority basis. Amjad Malik said the Punjab government aimed at providing various services to overseas Pakistanis at one place with the help of this office, including both online and in-person support. This office is striving to provide a coordinated and transparent method to resolve these issues. The goal of the Overseas Pakistanis Commission Punjab is to improve the quality of services for overseas citizens.

Siddiqui highlights land encroachment, police brutality

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Mohammad Usman Siddiqui, a Pakistani-origin British citizen and Vice President of the Pakistan-UK Trade Forum, held a press conference alongside Rauf Raja, Vice President Ayesha Khan and Member Muhammad Nawaz Basra to shed light on the land encroachment issue faced by overseas Pakistanis. Siddiqui, who arrived in Pakistan to attend IDEAS 2024 at the invitation of the Government of Pakistan, revealed that his ancestral land in the village of Gajriyan (Khasra No. 129) has been illegally occupied by a person named Nazakat Hussain. He stated that despite a court stay order, the accused parties have violated the order and established unlawful encroachments on the proper-

ty. Upon his arrival in Pakistan on November 9, 2024, Siddiqui faced harassment and obstructions during his visit. He revealed that false FIRs were registered against him in collaboration with the police in Azad Kashmir, aiming to damage his reputation. One of these FIRs, dated November 7, 2024, was filed prior to his arrival in Pakistan. This led to his illegal arrest, harassment, and damage to his property. Siddiqui further mentioned that on November 13, 2024, his property was forcibly occupied, wires and CCTV cameras were damaged, and his vehicle was unlawfully seized. He also accused Assistant Commissioner Tanveer-ul-Islam of issuing verbal threats and preventing his entry into Koi Ratta without any legal grounds. The issue has been reported to the SSP of Kotli,

where it was noted that subordinate staff, under the influence of Nazakat Hussain, manipulate reports to favor the encroachers. Nazakat Hussain, who works in the Revenue Department, has been meddling with the land records, changing the Khasra number from 129 to 128, and using his position to harass Siddiqui and his family by filing false cases and pressuring them into withdrawing their legal complaints. Siddiqui has requested the authorities to take disciplinary action against the accused and cancel the fabricated cases filed against him. He urged that the relevant authorities take swift action in accordance with the law. In response to a question, Mohammad Usman Siddiqui emphasized the challenges facing foreign investment in Pakistan, highlighting that local attitudes.



the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and H.E. Jam Kamal Khan, Federal Minister of Pakistan for Commerce. During the meeting, both the sides discussed matters of mutual interest including bilateral cooperation for enhancing the bilateral trade between the two countries that enjoy a

forms which had shown promising results in Ethiopia, addressing macro-economic imbalances, increasing productivity, creating ease of doing business and providing a conducive environment for attracting the foreign direct investment. Pakistani handicrafts Ethiopia

to strengthen its relations with the African countries including Ethiopia which is growth star of the African Continent, registering consistent economic growth under the leadership of Prime Minister of Ethiopia Dr. Abiy Ahmed.

Jirga agrees to make travel secure on Kohat-Hangu road

KOHAT :The Deputy Commissioner Orakzai Muhammad Irfanuddin on Friday held a Grand Jirga consisting of Sunni and Shia leaders of Orakzai District for peace in volatile district of Kurram. The jirga was convened in the light of the orders of the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and on the special directions of the Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Motasim Billah Shah, said a press release issued here. The jirga discussed the tense situation of Kurram district and continued blockade of Kohat-Hangu main Highway at the Kacha Pakka located at Kohat district. In the jirga, the elders of all the sects decided to secure travel on the Kohat-Hangu road and reiterated their commitment that the public transport plying on the said road would not be allowed to attack in the future. Moreover, the elders assured their overwhelming support and cooperation to the district administrations of Kohat, Orakzai and Hangu in this regard. In his concluding remarks, Deputy Commissioner Orakzai expressed gratitude for the assurance of full support from the local elders and appreciated their patriotic spirit. —APP

Women's literature festival concludes

PESHAWAR: The fourth day of the Women's Literature Festival at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women's University here (SBBWU) featured a vibrant lineup of events held across multiple venues, focusing on women's empowerment, intellectual growth, and cultural collaboration. The day commenced with a session on financial literacy led by Waqar Ali Khan, Chief Manager of the State Bank, and his team. Held in the main auditorium, the session emphasized strategies for

financial empowerment and highlighted opportunities for women in the banking sector, urging greater female participation in economic activities. In another venue, a session on the Drug-Free Peshawar initiative was held, with Sayed Fayaz Ali Shah as the chief guest. Shah provided an overview of the initiative's objectives and progress, commending the efforts of the Commissioner of Peshawar. Students from SBBWU performed a compelling play

highlighting the dangers of drug addiction, which received widespread acclaim for its impactful and educational message. At the DVC Hall, Khalid Taimur Akram, Executive Director of the Pakistan Research Center for a Community with Shared Future (PRCCSF) and an expert in South Asian and Eurasian affairs, served as session chair and delivered a keynote speech emphasizing the importance of regional collaboration. —APP

ISSI, IPS sign MoU for enhanced collaboration

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) and the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at fostering mutual collaboration. The signing ceremony was attended by senior representatives from both institutions, marking a significant step towards enhancing joint efforts in research and policy analysis. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General ISSI, in his welcome note, underscored the importance ISSI attached to closer collaboration with counterpart national think tanks, especially with niche area specializa-



tion. He commended IPS for its contributions to national causes and noted that both institutions share convergent perspectives on subjects im-

porting Pakistan in diverse areas. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood emphasised the need to expand collaboration in selected research areas

and proposed developing a roadmap for joint events and research initiatives. In this context, he identified a sharper focus on insightful research on Pakistan's neighbourhood, engagement with youth (NextGen initiative), and 'decolonization' in research, encouraging critical evaluation and indigenous knowledge beyond Western paradigms. Mr. Khalid Rehman, Chairman IPS, reflected on the past 40 years of collaboration between ISSI and IPS, and noted their joint efforts in conducting valuable research and analysis on significant historical events such as the Cold War. —APP

Decolonized approach to identity can resist exploitation of values, foster unity: Bargallie

Dr Bargallie shared insight from her research and personal experiences, exploring the historical links between Australia, Islam, and cultural relations

ISLAMABAD: The individual and collective identity defines the nature and characteristics of a person and a society. Identity is shaped by relationships, histories, and evolving contexts and is vital for mental peace and civilizational development. In a globalized world where societies are increasingly multicultural, adopting a relational and decolonized approach to identity can bridge divides, foster inclusivity, and reshape cultural connections. This perspective not only promotes a more equitable and interconnected future but also resists the exploitation of values, focusing instead on the shared humanity that unites us all.

This was noted by Dr Debbie Bargallie, associate professor and principal research fellow at Griffith Centre for Social and Cultural Research and Griffith Institute for Educational Research, Griffith University, Australia. She was delivering a talk during a seminar on "Reshaping Cultural Connections in a Globalized World" at the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Islamabad. The session was chaired by Dr Khalid Masud, member, Shariat Appellate Bench, Supreme Court of Pakistan, and joined by Khalid Rahman, chairman IPS. The event served as a precursor to an international seminar titled "The Role of Religions in Fostering Peace,

Harmony, and Justice," which IPS is organizing on December 4. Dr Bargallie highlighted the interconnectedness of cultural histories and identities, emphasizing how relationality and positioning shape knowledge and social research. Drawing from cultural theorist Stuart Hall's concept that all narratives are "in context" and positioned, she called for revisiting sidelined histories to foster a more inclusive understanding of cultural connections and identities. She shared insight from her research and personal experiences, exploring the historical links between Australia, Islam, and cultural relations. She noted that trade and

cultural exchanges between Muslims and Aboriginal Australians were established long before European colonization, as evidenced by ancient maps by Al-Khwarizmi drawn in 820 AD and Kilwa Sultanate coins found in Australia. These artifacts reveal a period of mutual engagement that predates European settlement. Dr Bargallie also elaborated on the contributions of 19th-century Muslim immigrants, including Afghans, Indians, Algerians, and Malays, who shaped Australia's industries as camelers, farmers, and hawkers. These contributions underscore the early foundations of Australia's multicultural fabric. However, she not-

ed the challenges faced by these communities under the racially exclusionary White Australia policy, which marginalized non-European migrants. Sharing a personal connection, she recounted how her great-grandfather, a Muslim from Punjab who migrated in the 1890s, was unable to leave Australia due to discriminatory policies like the English dictation test. Despite such challenges, the resilience and growth of Australia's Muslim community have significantly enriched the nation's multicultural identity. Pakistani migrants, now the 17th largest migrant group in Australia, exemplify this vibrancy. —APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

NOVEMBER

- Nov 01/Algeria National Day
- Nov 04/Italy Armed Forces Day
- Nov 07/Russian Federation Socialist Revolution
- Nov 09/Cambodia National Day
- Nov 11/Poland Independence Day
- Nov 14/Jordan Birthday of King Hussein
- Nov 15/Belgium Kings Day
- Nov 15/Brazil Republic Day
- Nov 15/Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus National Day
- Nov 18/Oman National Day
- Nov 18/Morocco Independence Day
- Nov 21/Bangladesh Armed Forces Day
- Nov 22/Lebanon Independence Day
- Nov 25/Suriname National Day
- Nov 28/Mauritania National Day
- Nov 28/Albania Flags Day

Hotels & Restaurants



Serena Hotel.....111 133 133
Marriott.....051- 2826121
Monal.....0334-5421812



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15
Bomb Disposal.....15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance.1122
& Rescue Services.4451122
Motorway Police.....9266044
Motorway Police.9270601-20
Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596
Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



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PIA Cargo.....9280979
Railway Inquiry.....117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi. 5555489
CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

CMH.....5611111
MH.....5611116
Cantt Hospital.....9270907-11
DHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-79
Polyclinic.....9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666



Departments

CDA.....9221334-43
CDA.....9208301-04
Met Office.....9250360-6
RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Denmark Embassy, UNODC, NACTA kick off peace project

Emphasizing, UNODC's Commitment to preventing violent extremism, Mr. Troels Vester, Country Representative UNODC said, "Today's match is part of a larger, groundbreaking initiative, to strengthen Pakistan's ability to prevent the spread of violent extremism, particularly in vulnerable communities and among the youth

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in collaboration with National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) and with the financial support from the Denmark Embassy kicked off the project "Strengthening Pakistan's response to effectively prevent the spread of violent extremism virtually and amongst youth in vulnerable communities (SPREE)" in Islamabad Model College for Boys (IMCB) H-9, Islamabad via football match. Aimed at improving the rule of law in Pakistan and bolstering regional stability, the project kick-off ceremony was marked by a football match titled "Play for Peace." The event aimed to demonstrate how sports can be a powerful tool to foster peace and tolerance among youth and society. The opening ceremony was graced by the Danish Ambassador, Mr. Jakob Linulf who in his remarks thanked NACTA, UNODC and college management for organizing the event. "Denmark firmly believes in the power of youth to drive positive change. By supporting initiatives like this, we are investing in the future of Pakistan's young generation, helping them to become leaders in promoting peace and stability," said the ambassador on the occasion. Emphasizing, UNODC's Commitment to preventing violent extremism, Mr. Troels Vester, Country Representative UNODC said, "Today's match is part of a larger, groundbreaking initiative, to strengthen Pakistan's ability to prevent the spread of violent extremism, particularly in vulnerable communities and among the



youth. Via this unique initiative, we continue providing spaces for young people to engage in constructive, community-building activities. UNODC Pakistan is proud to lead such initiatives that not only focus on law enforcement and security but also prioritize prevention through engagement and education." Director General Communications & Outreach NACTA Ms. Saleha Zakir Shah said that NACTA is deeply committed to preventing violent extremism in all its forms. As per mandate NACTA is not only fostering studies in understanding the factors that lead to radicali-

zation, especially among young people but also taking impact oriented tangible steps with its partner. She further remarked that social cohesion through youth engagement has great potential to strengthen the social fibre which is the core identification of Pakistan. DG NACTA emphasized that Sports has magnetic power to connect the youth with each other and urged the youths to adopt sportsmanship to invest in society with tolerance and co-existence. In this regard, communal efforts are the dire need of time to curb the menace of violent extremism, hate speech and terrorism. The

event began with the national anthem, setting the tone for a day steeped in unity and pride. Following this, players from both teams—the spirited Blues and the determined Whites—were introduced to the crowd, receiving cheers and encouragement. The IMCB H-9's football field was more than a venue that day—it became a stage for unity, hope, and a brighter future. The match was a spectacle. Divided into two halves of 30 minutes each, it was a display of skill, determination, and sportsmanship. The Blue team, known for their aggressive strategy, faced off against

the Whites, and celebrated for their defensive resilience. The first half was marked by intense back-and-forth action, with both teams creating scoring opportunities. Despite valiant efforts, neither side managed to find the back of the net, leaving the crowd on edge as they waited for a breakthrough. The match took a thrilling turn when the White team netted the first goal in the first 10 minutes, sparking jubilation among their supporters. Undeterred, the Blue team fought back with determination and resilience, demonstrating their unwavering spirit.

Political and military leadership handled crisis well

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, the President of the Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, the President of All Karachi Industrial Alliance, the Chairman of the FPCCI Advisory Board, and the President and former provincial minister, Mian Zahid Hussain, said on Friday that the business community pays tribute to the political and military leadership for handling the recent political crisis well. He said that the government's patience and tolerance have made this march a failure, which has relieved the masses and the business community. He added that the focus should be on economic development and providing all possible relief to the people. Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said Islamabad had been a battlefield for several days. Still, despite this, the President of Belarus visited Pakistan with a 70-member high-power delegation and dozens of agreements were signed. He underlined that the stock exchange also crossed the 100,000-point mark, which shows the growing confidence of the international and business communities. Mian Zahid Hussain said that the stock market has not performed well since 2017, but the IMF program and the determination of the political and military leadership to improve the economy have changed the situation. In addition, the business community has become convinced that the anarchist group will no longer be allowed to influence the country's economy. The business leader said the central bank had \$2.9 billion in May. Still, it has increased to \$16 billion; oil prices are moderate. At the same time, smuggling and unnecessary imports have been controlled, which has improved the overall economic situation. Due to better strategy, inflation and interest rates are declining, which has made the business community and the public optimistic about the future. The stock market was affected for a few days by the recent attack on Islamabad, but things have improved, leading to a huge surge in the stock market yesterday. Mian Zahid Hussain said the business community does not care who is in power. Still, they have become convinced that the policies will continue, which has increased their morale. Mian Zahid Hussain further said that investment is essential for the country's long-term economic development, and employment provision is fundamental for this. Almost sixty per cent of Pakistan's population consists of youth, who are already worried due to unemployment while providing human resources to the anarchist gang. He said that the government should fully focus on providing employment to the youth to prevent them from engaging in negative activities and that FPCCI should fully cooperate with the government for this noble cause.—APP

CPEC Chili Project earns reward at ongoing CISCE

DNA

ISLAMABAD: CPEC Chili Project earned reward at the ongoing at the 2nd China International Supply Chain Expo (CISCE), China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Friday. During a featured event—the Trade Promotion Think Tank Exchange and the release of the "One Report, Two Indices"—an awards ceremony was held for the Global Supply Chain Promotion Research Competition. Among the recognized works, the report titled "Enhancing the Quality of Green Agricultural Supply Chains under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: A Case Study of the Pakistan-China Chili Project", co-authored by Professor Song Zhihui from Sichuan University's Pakistan Study Center and Dr. Liu Yajing of China Agricultural University, stood out, earning third prize in the Business Advocacy Award category. Professor Song Zhihui told CEN that as a project aimed at improving the quality of green agricultural supply chains

under CPEC, his team was confident from the start in the research's practical significance and long-term strategic value. "Our case study on the Pakistan-China chili project gave us a thorough understanding of the critical role green agriculture plays in global supply chains. Green agriculture is not only essential for improving product quality and promoting sustainable development, but it is also a vital measure for addressing global environmental crisis and advancing agricultural modernization." Dr. Liu Yajing noted that the recognition from the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) underscores not only the outcomes of deep reflection and exploration by outstanding enterprises but also the potential and prospects for agricultural cooperation within CPEC. The study identified agriculture as a crucial area for bilateral collaboration, aligning with the resource strengths of both China and Pakistan. By sharing expertise and

technology, the two countries can address economic challenges, improve farmer incomes, and promote sustainable development. The chili project exemplifies this approach, combining Pakistan's agricultural assets with China's supply chain expertise to create significant value. While addressing key challenges in the bilateral supply chain under CPEC, the researchers said that logistical inefficiencies, including inadequate infrastructure and high transportation costs, remain significant barriers. Differences in product standards and insufficient systems for information sharing further complicate cross-border operations. The need for resilient supply chains has become increasingly critical in the face of global economic uncertainties. The researchers proposed several solutions, including improving infrastructure, developing talent through specialized training programs, investing in e-commerce and digital platforms, and enhancing policy coordination between the two governments.

"Ba'Tie Girl" Returns to Chinese Cinemas

ISLAMABAD: The highly anticipated re-release of "Ba'Tie Girl", the groundbreaking co-production between Pakistani and Chinese producers will take place in Chinese mainland on December 16. The film, which translates to "The Girl from Ironclad-Brotherly Pakistan", revolves around the heartwarming friendship between a Chinese woman and a Pakistani teenage girl, bonded by their shared passion for football. China Economic Net (CEN) reported. Having premiered in Chinese mainland on November 11, 2021, and later in Pakistan in August 2023, "Ba'Tie Girl" stars Chinese actress Wang Jiajia and Pakistani actress Shaiza Channa. The film beautifully captures the essence of Sino-Pakistani friendship and the timeless spirit of sportsmanship through cinematic storytelling of the mutual support and understanding between the people of the two countries. The film follows the journey of Lu You a Chinese athlete whose football career is cut short due to a serious injury. Seeking solace, she travels to a remote Pakistani village, where she meets a spirited teenage girl Nasha. Despite their cultural differences, the two form an unbreakable bond over their shared love for football, embarking on a journey of self-discovery and resilience. "Ba'Tie Girl" has garnered significant attention not only in China and Pakistan but also at international film festivals, including the Silk Road International Film Festival and the Pingyao International Film Festival. Reception to the film has been positive, highlighting its timeless themes of friendship, perseverance and the triumph of the human spirit. On Maoyan, a Chinese movie ticketing platform, netizens expressed their excitement and anticipation for the film's re-release. Many have commented on the heartwarming portrayal of friendship and the inspiring message of perseverance conveyed through "Ba'Tie Girl". The re-release of "Ba'Tie Girl" in China holds special significance, marking a renewed celebration of China-Pakistan ties and the power of cinema to bring people together. As the world continues to grapple with the challenges of globalization and cultural differences, the film serves as a reminder of the importance of mutual understanding and cooperation.—DNA

CDNS attains Rs 560b mark in annual savings target

ISLAMABAD: The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has accomplished a target of Rs 560 billion in fresh bonds and achieved 33.94 percent of the annual target for the current fiscal year, from July 1 to November 27th. The CDNS has set an annual target of Rs 1650 billion for the current Fiscal Year, 2024-25, which will promote the saving culture in the country, the senior official of CDNS told APP on Friday. Similarly, the CDNS has set a target of Rs 170 billion in investment in Islamic finance for the Current Fiscal Year, which will lead to the growth of the Islamic economy in the country. Replying to a question, he said that the CDNS has realized a target of Rs1.742 trillion in fresh bonds and exceeded 100 percent of the annual target in the last fiscal year 2023-24, from July 1 to June 30. National Savings has set an annual target of Rs 1.7 trillion for the year 2023-24; it is encouraging that this year, "We surpassed the 100 percent of the annual target." The CDNS surpassed the annual target and achieved the target of Rs 1.6 trillion in fresh bonds in the previous fiscal year 2022-23, he said. He said it was an Rs 200 billion additional annual target than the target of Rs 1300 billion for the previous financial year 2021-22. The CDNS has set a reviewed saving target of Rs 1.4 trillion for the financial year (2021-22) which will promote a savings culture in the country, he said, adding that given the current market trend in the country, the ambitious target had been set to further improve the savings culture. The official said that work was being done on institutional reforms in CDNS and new reforms and innovations were being introduced.—APP

ANF recovers 197 kg drugs in 4 operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting four operations managed to recover 197 kg drugs worth over Rs 14.4 million and arrested five suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Friday. He informed that 49 heroin-filled capsules were recovered from the stomach of a Saudi Arabia-bound passenger at Islamabad International Airport. 32 grams weed was recovered from a parcel sent from the UK at a courier office in Chaklala, Rawalpindi. 20 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle intercepted on Kuchlak Road in Quetta and four suspects were arrested. 176.4 kg hashish hidden from smuggling was recovered from a house located in Saranan area in Pishin.—APP

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Briefs

JMC to set new standards of healthcare, research in capital

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal has chaired a meeting to review progress on the Jinnah Medical Complex (JMC) project, which would set new standards of healthcare and research in the Federal Capital. Key officials, including Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Health Dr Malik Mukhtar Ahmad Bharath, Secretary National Health Services Prof. Khalid Saeed Akhtar, CDA chairman and representatives from Bostan Consultants, attended the meeting, a news release said on Friday. A detailed presentation on the project's master plan was given by Bostan Consultants, followed by a thorough discussion. The committee approved the plan, and Ahsan Iqbal proposed renaming the project as the Jinnah Medical Research Center to reflect its focus on advanced medical research and healthcare. The minister emphasized the importance of modern designs, green building principles, and combining traditional construction methods with advanced techniques like precast structures to ensure top-quality construction. The Pakistan Kidney and Liver Institute (PKLI) will finalize the project's design by February 2025, with necessary approvals expected by April 2025. A special Project Management Unit (PMU) will oversee the work, under a dedicated project director and supported by a skilled team. A specialized consultant will be hired to ensure smooth and timely completion of the project. To make the facility more comprehensive, the minister directed the inclusion of sports and recreational facilities for medical students, such as a gymnasium, sports ground and tennis court. Separate entrances for emergency patients and ambulances will also enhance the facility's efficiency. Ahsan Iqbal said the Jinnah Medical Research Center will be a groundbreaking project, focusing on advanced medical education and research. "It will set new standards in healthcare and infrastructure, benefiting the people of Pakistan and aligning with the government's vision to improve healthcare and education for a better future," he remarked.—APP

Mother-in-law's murderer arrested

RAWALPINDI: The Saddar Baroni Police have arrested an accused who had killed his mother-in-law a few days ago over a domestic dispute. The accused Shahid had injured his mother-in-law Kausar Bibi with a wooden stick, who later succumbed to her injuries in the hospital, the Rawalpindi Police spokesman said on Friday. The Saddar Baroni Police had registered the case of incident on the complaint of the victim's husband.—APP

PMDC extends BDS program's tenure

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PM&DC) has officially announced the extension of the Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) program from four to five years. The new policy will be implemented in the country from session 2024-2025. In a statement, President PM&DC Prof. Dr. Rizwan Taj highlighted the significant benefits of the change. He explained that the decision was made keeping in view the challenges faced by BDS graduates from Pakistan in securing training or jobs etc across the globe where 5 five-year BDS transcript is required. He said that the

PODA inspires girl students to help combat gender-based violence

As part of its 3-year project, "Reduce Early Marriages to Enhance Gender Equality," supported by the Norwegian Embassy, Islamabad, PODA is working tirelessly to eradicate early marriages and promote gender equality across 41 districts of Punjab

MAHNOOR ANSAR

RAWALPINDI: PODA conducted two engaging sessions on life-based skills education for the more than 60 girl and boy students of The Basic School in a low-to middle-income locality. Through interactive parallel sessions in two separate classrooms, PODA empowered the students with confidence-building strategies, emphasizing the significance of education and essential skills for economic empowerment. By imparting these valuable skills, PODA aims to enable these young girls to play a vital role in the country's progress. These activities were part of the ongoing 16 Days of Activism Campaign against Gender-based Violence which is being observed from 25 December to 10 December.

As part of its 3-year project, "Reduce Early Marriages to Enhance Gender Equality," supported by the Norwegian Embassy, Islamabad, PODA is working tirelessly to eradicate early marriages and promote gender equality across 41 districts of Punjab. In collaboration with key stakeholders, including legislatures, government officials, politicians, community leaders, academicians, lady health workers, nikah khawan/registrars, educational institutions, women, girls, youth, lawyers, and bar associations, PODA advocates for amending the Child Marriage Restraint Act 2015 - Punjab. The proposed amendment seeks to raise the minimum age of mar-



riage for girls to 18 years, with the National Identity Card being made mandatory for marriage registration. Renowned Supreme Court Advocate, Ms. Hifza Bukhari, delivered an inspiring talk, sharing her personal journey and highlighting the significance of pursuing a career in law. She offered valuable insights and practical advice on becoming a lawyer, emphasizing the vital role legal professionals play in upholding justice, promoting active citizenship, and strengthening the country's foundation. Ms. Bukhari acknowledged the challenges women face in this male-dominated profession, where

they are often discouraged from joining. However, her session motivated the audience to consider a career in law, ultimately contributing to a more just and equitable society. Ms. Sadia Jamil, Vice Principal of the school, expressed her appreciation for PODA's efforts in providing students with practical knowledge and skills for their lives ahead. She noted that these sessions aimed to empower girl students, enabling them to create a positive impact in their communities and contribute to the growth of more resilient and empowered communities. As part of the ongoing 16 Days of Activism Campaign against Gender-Based Violence,



PODA organized a drawing competition to educate students about their rights and strategies to protect themselves from harassment and violence. Under the guidance of PODA's Project Manager, Nabeela Aslam, the activity informed students about their fundamental human and constitutional rights. The session emphasized Article 25-A of the Constitution of Pakistan, guaranteeing compulsory education for children aged 5-16, and covered their rights to play, health, and skills to combat harassment, ultimately empowering them to assert their rights and well-being. During the "Drawing Competition", six students

shared disturbing stories of six girls under the age of 14 who had been married, either within their immediate surroundings or among their relatives. The interactive sessions conducted by PODA provided valuable insights and practical lessons for the participants. The key learnings from the sessions included the significance of life skills in navigating real-life challenges, effective communication skills, and strategies for building resilience and confidence. The sessions emphasized the crucial role of education in promoting emotional intelligence and well-being, leading to a more impactful and practical life.

Ahsan calls for critical thinking, teamwork in education system

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal chaired a progress-review meeting on the initiative of Teacher Training Institute, emphasizing the urgent need for education reforms to prepare the youth for future challenges. The meeting was attended by senior officials, including the Secretary and Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Federal Education, along with officials from the Planning and Education Ministries, a news release said on Friday. The minister was briefed on the teacher training initiative, led by the National Institute of Excellence in Teacher Education (NIETE) in collaboration with the LUMS School of Education. Discussing the proposed education reforms, Ahsan Iqbal emphasized the importance of reviving foundational ethics and fostering a global perspective among youth. "Our education system must focus on building team dynamics, fostering collaboration, and achieving collective successes," he added. The minister underscored the evolving role of teachers as knowledge managers, responsible for producing future leaders equipped with life skills and a strong sense of community. The meeting highlighted significant shortcomings in the country's education system, noting that 1.8 million teachers required preparation for modern challenges. Additionally, with 1 million new teachers needed to meet growing demographic demands, the minister said stressing the importance of globally accredited training programs to align with 21st-century teaching standards. Proposed solutions included adopting best practices from countries like Finland, Singapore, Australia and Vietnam, focusing on integrating theory with practice, fostering adaptability, and linking accreditation to career progression. Ahsan Iqbal further stressed the need for mandatory certifications for headmasters and headmistresses to evaluate their leadership abilities, and directed the public sector schools be equipped to impart essential skills, ensuring wide-reaching societal benefits from the proposed reforms.—APP

APHC-AJK expresses full solidarity with oppressed Palestinians

ISLAMABAD: All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir (APHC-AJK) Chapter has expressed its unwavering solidarity with the Palestinian people on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. In a statement issued here on Friday, the Convener of the APHC-AJK Chapter, Ghulam Mohammad Safi, strongly condemned the ongoing genocide of Palestinians by Zionist forces and appealed to the international community, the Muslim Ummah, human rights organizations, and the global community to take immediate and decisive action to halt Israel's atrocities. Ghulam Mohammad Safi expressed his deep concern over Israel's continued bombardment of Gaza and other parts of Palestine, describing it as the worst state-sponsored terrorism in modern history. He stated that, in the past year alone, Israel has

dropped over 80,000 tons of explosives on Gaza, reducing nearly the entire region to rubble. "The scale of destruction is unparalleled," said Safi, adding that over 44,000 Palestinians have been martyred and more than 100,000 injured as a result of Israeli bombardment. He also highlighted the tragic fact that more than 30,000 of those killed are innocent children. Thousands more remain trapped under the debris, with little hope of survival. The APHC-AJK Convener expressed his frustration at the United Nations' failure to stop the bloodshed, noting that the international body has remained powerless in the face of Israel's actions, often bowing to pressure from the United States and Israel. He called on nations that value human rights and justice to unite in raising their voices against the Israeli occupation and atrocities in Palestine. "The United Nations has failed

to protect the oppressed peoples of Kashmir and Palestine," Safi lamented. "Instead of holding Israel and India accountable for their violent actions, the UN has repeatedly sided with the perpetrators of violence." The Hurriyat leader also urged the leaders of the Muslim world to take concrete steps to prevent the ongoing genocide of both Palestinians and Kashmiris. "Israel has proven itself to be the greatest enemy of humanity, committing heinous atrocities against the Palestinian people. It is time for the global community to act decisively and put an end to this bloodshed," he emphasized. Safi concluded his statement by reaffirming the APHC-AJK's commitment to standing with the Palestinian people in their struggle for justice, dignity, and freedom, and called for a united global effort to hold Israel accountable for its war crimes.

Weekly inflation decelerates to 5.13%

ISLAMABAD: The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), decelerated to 5.13 percent on year-on-year (YoY) basis during the week ended on November 28 as compared to corresponding week of last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. The inflation, witnessed a decrease of 0.03 percent for the combined consumption groups during the week under review as compared to the last week as it was recorded at 324.00 points as compared to 324.11 points respectively. The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 = 100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. SPI for the lowest consumption group of up to Rs 17,732 witnessed increase of 0.06 per cent and went up to 318.60 points from last week's 318.40 points. The SPI for consumption groups from Rs 17,732 to 22,888 also increased by 0.02 whereas it remained constant for consumption group from Rs 22,889-29,517. However, the inflation for consumption groups from Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175 decreased by 0.02 percent and 0.06 percent respectively. During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 12 (23.53%) items increased, 09 (17.65%) items decreased and 30 (58.82%) items remained stable. The items, which recorded major decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week basis included chicken (3.78%), tomatoes (2.23%), pulse gram (1.60%), pulse masoor (1.38%), rice basmati broken (1.15%), gur (0.59%), pulse mash (0.53%) and pulse moong (0.25%). The commodities which recorded major increase in their average prices on week-on-week basis included potatoes (3.34%), garlic (1.69%), bananas (1.13%), vegetable ghee 2.5 kg (0.99%), vegetable ghee 1 kg (0.93%), mustard oil (0.91%), cooking oil 5 litre (0.77%), eggs (0.65%), washing soap (0.53%) and lpg (0.20%).—APP

Pakistan's exports to US increase 9.39%

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's export of goods and services to the United States (US) witnessed an increase of 9.39 percent during the first four months of the current fiscal year (2024-25) as compared to the exports of the corresponding months of last year, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported. The overall exports to the US were recorded at US \$2.037 billion during July-October (2024-25) against exports of US \$1.862 billion during July-October (2023-24), SBP data revealed. On a year-to-year basis, the exports to the US also surged to \$575.889 million in October 2024 against the export of \$485.786 million in October 2023. Meanwhile, on a month-on-month basis, the exports to the US witnessed an increase of 12.58 percent during October 2024 as compared to the exports of \$511.525 million in September 2024, the SBP data revealed. Overall Pakistan's exports to other countries witnessed an increase of 8.64 percent in the first four months, from US \$9.671 billion to US \$10.507 billion, the SBP data revealed. On the other hand, the imports from the US into the country during the months under review were recorded at US \$739.163 million against US \$589.239 million last year, showing an increase of 24.44 percent in July-October (2024-25). On a year-on-year basis, the imports for the US also increased to US \$180.407 million in October 2024, against the export of US \$117.462 million in October 2023. On a month-on-month basis, the imports from the US into the country witnessed a nominal decrease of 4.08 percent during October 2024, as compared to the imports of US \$188.095 million during September 2024, according to the data. The overall imports into the country witnessed an increase of 12.96 per cent, from \$16.671 billion to US \$18.832 billion, according to the data.—DNA

SCBAP for immediate release of journalist

ISLAMABAD: Mian Muhammad Rauf Atta, President, Supreme Court Bar Association of Pakistan (SCBAP) has termed the allegations against eminent journalist Mati Ullah Jan frivolous and called for his immediate release from police custody. In a written statement issued here on Friday, the President SCBAP said the SCBAP stands for the rule of law, safeguarding fundamental rights, and protecting human rights as provided in the Constitution. We strongly denounce the FIR registered against Mati Ullah Jan. The charges included in the FIR appear to be frivolous, baseless, and motivated. This Association reaffirms its strong commitment to freedom of speech, movement, assembly, and the press. We assert that our judicial system has failed to protect the basic fundamental rights of its citizens. A classic example of this judicial failure is the decision to place Mr. Mati Ullah in physical remand for two days, despite the lack of substantial evidence against him.—APP

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Trump's tech war

AS US lawmakers launch a new propaganda war against Hong Kong being a hub for sanctions-busting and money-laundering, Jensen Huang, the boss of Nvidia, the world's most important AI chipmaker, visited the city on a high-profile trip to receive an honorary PhD. At the same time, his head of global business operations met China's top trade negotiator, Wang Shouwen, to discuss commercial opportunities ahead of an expected new round of US chip sanctions. The message they sent is clear, and it is not a patriotic one so long as Washington is concerned. The return of Donald Trump is likely to intensify America's tech war against China. But top tech firms such as the US-based Nvidia and foreign ones such as the Dutch chip equipment maker ASML are increasingly upset about losing their best customer, China. As a new essay in Foreign Affairs points out, that's a losing proposition for the United States when you trade prosperity and opportunity for economic security, assuming the latter is even achievable. "Washington has placed restrictions on US innovation that so far outweigh the good that has come from the investments," Scott Kennedy writes in "How America's War on Chinese Tech Backfired - And Why Trump's Plans Would Make Things Even Worse". "Export controls have reduced business opportunities for American semiconductor firms; less revenue means less investment in R&D and less innovation. Specific restrictions, coupled with the chilling effect produced by increased geopolitical tensions, have reduced opportunities and income for US firms," Kennedy writes. About 850 Chinese institutions and individuals are currently on a black list curbing access to American technologies by the US Commerce Department, which is about to add another 200 Chinese chip companies. Trump looks set to expand the trade and tech war being waged by outgoing President Joe Biden. The latter's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, has famously described their strategy as "small yard, high fence", meaning only a small number of critical technologies will be shielded from the Chinese, though at a very high cost to America, or "de-risking" without a wholesale "decoupling" from the Chinese economy. The problem is China, in a whole-of-government national strategy, keeps making progress and even breakthroughs in critical technologies, and Washington keeps expanding the list. So it's not just semiconductors, but commercial drones, electric cars, solar panels and self-driving vehicles. Some speculate the next field will be pharmaceuticals. The problem is that "high fences" are expensive to maintain. "Washington's array of tools is highly expensive: export controls, tariffs, product bans, inbound and outbound investment screening, constraints on data flows, incentives to shift supply chains, limits on scholarly exchange and research collaboration, industrial policy expenditures, and buy-America incentives," as Kennedy argues. Assuming, as it is very likely, that Trump will intensify his trade and tech war against China, that "small yard" will get bigger and bigger, as it already has under Biden. It may end up with some kind of wholesale decoupling. But the more technologies you want to deny the Chinese, the more expensive those "fences" get as you need to make them ever higher and bigger. The Chinese are obviously not standing still. Not only have they proved capable of catching up and making breakthroughs, but also they are creating entire domestic ecosystems and independent supply chains by phasing out American parts and components.

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Israeli settlement plan

ISRAELI media revealed a new settlement plan supported by ministers and Knesset members from the governing coalition that aims to change the status quo in the Ibrahim Mosque in al-Khalil, exploiting the world's preoccupation with the ongoing genocide in the Gaza Strip. The Hebrew website "Zman Israel" reported that "the plan aims to transform the Ibrahim Mosque into a national Jewish heritage site, including the confiscation of the site and making it similar to the Buraq Square at Al-Aqsa." It noted that this plan has support from prominent American figures, including officials in the administration of President-elect Donald Trump. The head of the KiryatArba settlement in al-Khalil said that ministers in premier Benjamin Netanyahu's government confirmed that significant surprises are coming for the settlers, including "substantial developments" regarding Jewish prayer in the Ibrahim Mosque. He added, "The arrangements imposed by the Shamgar Committee regarding prayer in (the Ibrahim) after the Goldstein massacre have become outdated. The world has changed a lot since then, and it is time to review those decisions," questioning, "How can Arabs pray inside, while we remain outside under the open sky?" The report mentioned settlement celebrations that took place last Saturday inside the Ibrahim Mosque with the participation of thousands of settlers, which witnessed a significant political presence, including ministers and Knesset members such as Itamar Ben Gvir, Bezalel Smotrich, and Orit Strock. Changing the status quo in the mosque was the central theme during those celebrations. Knesset member Avichai Boaron from Netanyahu's Likud party affirmed that Trump's election represents a favorable opportunity to seize the Ibrahim Mosque from the control of Islamic endowments, stressing the need to transform it into a modern place of prayer to solve current overcrowding issues. Knesset member Tzvi Sukkot said that the area designated for Jewish prayer is 35 percent of the Ibrahim Mosque's area, adding, "This situation is unacceptable. Therefore, we are working to expand Jewish prayer arrangements to include the entire sanctuary throughout the day." Sukkot further noted that the proposed plans "include dramatic steps to change the administrative and logistical control of the site." The "Zman Israel" report highlighted Bezalel Smotrich's vision, supported by Boaron and Sukkot, which considers 2025 as the year to implement the annexation plan and impose Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank, indicating that the plan classifies the Ibrahim Mosque as a pivotal site. The report stated that one of the American figures supporting this project, Mike Huckabee, who will take on the role of U.S. ambassador to Israel early next year, supports the "biblical vision" for complete control over historic Palestine. The "Zman Israel" website warned that these political moves, backed by the American extreme right-wing, "forebode igniting a serious conflict in one of the most sensitive holy sites, putting the entire region at risk of escalation whose consequences are unpredictable."

Trump's Comeback and Saudi Arabia's Yemen Strategy

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The United States has traditionally supported Saudi Arabia's efforts to counter Iranian influence, recognizing the Kingdom as a critical ally in maintaining the balance of power in the Middle East. However, the dynamics of this partnership could be influenced by changes in U.S. leadership. President Trump, who had previously strengthened ties with Saudi Arabia, returns to the political arena with a reputation for favoring assertive foreign policies and could potentially push for a return to a more...

THE Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's recent shift towards a more restrained approach to the Houthis rebels in Yemen. The former U.S. President Donald Trump's return to the political stage holds significant implications for regional security and U.S.-Saudi relations. This development matters as it could potentially affect the Kingdom's security posture against Iranian influence in the region, while U.S. support may prove pivotal in shaping the outcomes of this conflict. This essay explores the strategic rationale behind Saudi Arabia's moderated stance, the potential ramifications for regional stability and the influence Trump's return to the political stage might exert on Saudi policies. Historically, Saudi Arabia has taken a firm stance against the Houthis, viewing them as an extension of Iranian influence in Yemen and a direct threat to its security. The Kingdom has engaged in years of military action to curb Houthi advances and prevent a consolidation of Iran-backed groups along its borders. However, recent diplomatic developments signal a shift in Saudi strategy. Instead of seeking to militarily defeat the Houthis, Riyadh has opted for a muted, more cautious approach that focuses on maintaining a controlled stability along its southern border. This reflects a broader trend in Saudi foreign policy, prioritizing short-term stability over an all-out conflict that could result in severe economic and political costs. This strategy is reminiscent of Israel's policy toward Hamas in Gaza, which has often involved managing conflict levels rather than pursuing complete military victory. While this approach might create a temporary quiet, it leaves unresolved tensions and risks a future escalation. The decision to de-escalate also appears to be influenced by the broader Saudi vision of economic reform and diversification under Vision 2030, which depends on a stable regional

environment. Engaging in prolonged military confrontations with the Houthis could compromise these economic goals, especially as Saudi Arabia aims to attract foreign investments and reduce its dependency on oil revenue. While Saudi Arabia's softened approach may allow for short-term stability, it could also inadvertently embolden Iranian influence in the region. Iran's support for the Houthis has allowed it to maintain a foothold on the Arabian Peninsula, enabling the projection of power and influence close to Saudi borders. A less confrontational Saudi approach might be perceived by Tehran as a weakness, potentially encouraging further Iranian support for its allies and proxies throughout the Middle East. Moreover, the Kingdom's de-escalation could undermine its deterrence capabilities, which were largely predicated on its ability to respond assertively to threats along its borders. This softer stance may also complicate U.S.-Saudi relations. The United States has traditionally supported Saudi Arabia's efforts to counter Iranian influence, recognizing the Kingdom as a critical ally in maintaining the balance of power in the Middle East. However, the dynamics of this partnership could be influenced by changes in U.S. leadership. President Trump, who had previously strengthened ties with Saudi Arabia, returns to the political arena with a reputation for favoring assertive foreign policies and could potentially push for a return to a more forceful Saudi posture against the Houthis and Iran. The re-entry of Donald Trump into U.S. politics may introduce a shift in the American approach to Middle Eastern affairs, particularly in relation to Saudi Arabia and Iran. Trump's administration had emphasized "maximum pressure" on Iran, leading to increased sanctions and a more confrontational stance against Iranian allies across the region.

Under Trump's potential return to the White House, there could be renewed U.S. support for a stronger Saudi stance against the Houthis. This approach would signal to Iran and other regional actors that the United States remains committed to countering Iranian influence, bolstering Saudi Arabia's position. Trump's potential influence on U.S.-Saudi relations could also manifest through increased support for Saudi defense initiatives. During his previous term, Trump facilitated significant arms sales to Saudi Arabia, reinforcing the Kingdom's defense capabilities. A renewed alignment of U.S. strategic goals with Saudi interests could shift the current balance of power, encouraging Saudi Arabia to adopt a more assertive stance towards the Houthis, while also containing Iranian influence. This could lead to a resurgence of military engagements in Yemen, altering the regional power dynamics in favor of U.S.-aligned actors.

Given the complex interplay between Saudi Arabia's cautious diplomacy and the potential for heightened U.S. support under Trump, the Kingdom faces a critical juncture. Maintaining a posture of cautious diplomacy may stabilize the immediate situation but is unlikely to resolve the underlying threats posed by Iranian influence. The Kingdom must reassess its approach, balancing its immediate need for stability with the longer-term goal of countering Iranian expansionism. For Saudi Arabia, a robust stance against Iran and its proxies in Yemen is crucial for ensuring its security and maintaining its role as a regional leader. This approach, however, requires external support to be sustainable, particularly in terms of intelligence, military aid and political backing from the United States. Trump's potential influence could provide the Kingdom with a renewed opportunity to realign its strategy with a broader U.S.-led regional policy, countering Iranian influence more effectively.

Building Bridges: Sardar Ayaz Sadiq's Moscow visit and Pakistan-Russia collaboration

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Speaker Sadiq's tenure as Speaker of the National Assembly was marked by other key initiatives that bolstered Pakistan-Russia relations. Earlier, he hosted Russian parliamentary delegations in Islamabad, facilitating discussions on trade, economic collaboration, and legislative exchanges. These engagements emphasized the mutual...

THE parliamentary relationship between Russia and Pakistan has experienced remarkable growth, particularly during the tenure of Sardar Ayaz Sadiq as Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan. His proactive diplomatic outreach and commitment to fostering bilateral ties have significantly elevated the scope and depth of collaboration between the two nations. A notable milestone in this relationship was Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq's official visit to Moscow from November 27 to 29, 2024, on the invitation of H.E. Vyacheslav Volodin, Chairman of the State Duma of the Russian Federation. Leading a delegation of parliamentarians, including Rana Muhammad Hayat Khan, Abdul Qadir Patel, Syed Agha Rafiullah, Dr. Muhammad Farooq Sattar, and Sher Ali Arbab, Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq embarked on this visit to strengthen parliamentary ties. The delegation was warmly received by Vice Chairman of the State Duma, Alexander Babakov, signifying the respect Russia extended to Pakistan's parliamentary leadership. This visit reflected the mutual desire to expand cooperation in areas such as economic development, counterterrorism, and cultural exchange. A significant achievement of the visit was the signing of an Agreement on Cooperation between the State Duma and the National Assembly of Pakistan. During his meeting with Chairman Volodin, Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq emphasized the unprecedented level of cooperation already established between the two legislatures. Chairman Volodin highlighted the agreement as a foundation for exploring innovative formats of collaboration to address shared challenges and enhance mutual benefits. Discussions encompassed vital areas like food security, economic partnerships, and counterterrorism, showcasing the comprehensive approach adopted by both countries in fostering bilateral ties.

The delegation's visit also included a poignant moment of remembrance when Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Alexander Garden, near the Kremlin wall. Accompanied by Vasily Piskarev, Chairman of the State Duma's Committee on Security and Anti-Corruption, this tribute to the fallen heroes of World War II underscored the shared values of resilience and respect for historical sacrifices. An essential dimension of the visit was the focus on interfaith harmony and cultural cooperation. In a meeting with Professor Damir Mukhetdinov, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Muftis, Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq commended Russia's stance against Islamophobia and praised President Vladimir Putin's respect for religious diversity. He acknowledged the growing camaraderie between Russia and the Muslim world and emphasized the importance of interfaith dialogue in fostering understanding and unity. Both sides expressed a commitment to enhancing cultural and religious exchanges, further strengthening ties beyond political and economic realms. Global issues also featured prominently during Speaker Sadiq's engagements in Moscow. He condemned the ongoing brutality in Palestine, expressing solidarity with its people and calling for collective international efforts to address the crisis. Such expressions of empathy highlighted Pakistan's broader commitment to justice and peace in the global arena. Speaker Sadiq's tenure as Speaker of the National Assembly was marked by other key initiatives that bolstered Pakistan-Russia relations. Earlier, he hosted Russian parliamentary delegations in Islamabad, facilitating discussions on trade, economic collaboration, and legislative exchanges. These engagements emphasized the mutual respect and shared goals underpinning the bilat-

relationship. Additionally, during international parliamentary conferences, Speaker Sadiq consistently advocated for Pakistan-Russia energy cooperation, regional connectivity, and counterterrorism efforts, paving the way for joint ventures and collaborative solutions to shared challenges. Multilateral forums also served as a platform for advancing common interests. Pakistan and Russia jointly championed issues like counterterrorism and regional stability, reinforcing their partnership in addressing global and regional challenges. The exchange of parliamentary delegations during Speaker Sadiq's tenures underscored the shared commitment to fostering mutual understanding and creating opportunities for deeper engagement. The Moscow visit concluded with Speaker Sadiq extending a formal invitation to Chairman Volodin to visit Pakistan. This gesture demonstrated his vision for sustained dialogue and engagement, essential for nurturing long-term relations between the two nations. The invitation reflected the Speaker's dedication to elevating parliamentary diplomacy as a cornerstone of bilateral relations. Under Sardar Ayaz Sadiq's leadership, Pakistan's parliamentary diplomacy has emerged as a vital instrument in strengthening international partnerships. His emphasis on dialogue, mutual respect, and collaboration has not only deepened ties with Russia but has also set the stage for a more robust and comprehensive relationship. The progress achieved during his tenure is a testament to the power of parliamentary diplomacy in addressing global challenges and fostering mutual understanding. As Pakistan and Russia continue to build on this foundation, their partnership holds the promise of greater achievements in the years to come.

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PIA to resume flights to Europe

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had expressed concern over the "serious lapse in licensing and safety oversight by the aviation regulator". Subsequently, on June 24, 2020, the aviation minister announced that the qualifications of 262 of the country's 860 pilots in Pakistan are "dubious" and thus they will be barred from flying. It is to be noted that EASA licenses, issued by the European Union, carry weight not only within EU member states but also in numerous other countries.

PTI confirms 12 deaths in Islamabad...

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proof of the deaths, as hospitals were pressured not to share lists with the media. "Which law allows shooting unarmed people?" he asked. "Which government has opened fire on peaceful citizens? How can state machinery be used against its own people?" he added. Sheikh said demanding the right to protest is not a crime, and a right granted by the constitution. "Our workers were prepared for tear gas and rubber bullets, but not for firearms and bullets," he said. "What has the state done to its own people?" Sheikh asked, expressing disbelief at the government's approach. He also questioned the contradictory statements from ministers, who claim no shots were fired, yet fatalities and injuries continue to be reported. "If no shots were fired, then who is responsible for these deaths?" he asked. He further warned that the government's heavy-handed tactics would only fuel more hatred and division.

CM Gandapur denies...

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any discord are purely fabricated and part of a smear campaign." The statement comes amid reports of differences between Gandapur and Bushra after the recent Islamabad protest, particularly on the matter of staging the sit-in at D-Chowk. The former ruling party's "do-or-die" protest demanding Khan's release culminated with more than 1,000 supporters being arrested by authorities. PTI Secretary-General Salman Akram Raja, claiming that at least 20 people lost their lives, has said that the party would approach the courts against the government, the Ministry of Interior, and the interior minister. Meanwhile, Islamabad's police chief, Ali Rizvi, denied that live ammunition had been used during the operation. PTI leader Sher Afzal Marwat on Thursday said that KP CM Gandapur was not in favour of marching towards D-Chowk.

PM decides to establish federal...

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thought of such evil ambitions before 2014." The former ruling party staged a 126-day sit-in in 2014 against alleged rigging during the 2013 general elections. PM Shehbaz was of the view that the 2014 sit-in not only brought disrepute to Pakistan but also ruined the country's economy. "Chinese president's visit was cancelled due to the [PTI] dharna." The former ruling party also tried to "attack" Islamabad ahead of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit, he added. It is pertinent to mention here that the PTI issued a nationwide call last month urging its supporters to converge on Islamabad on Oct 15, a date when the two-day SCO summit was to begin. Later, the former ruling party called off its protest after the government assured the party leadership of Khan's treatment, who has been behind bars since August last year after he was sentenced in the Toshakhana criminal case, and subsequently sentenced in other cases ahead of the February 8 elections.

ICC directs Pakistan, India to find 'solution' amid deadlock

"A logical option will be explored for the Champions Trophy in the next 24 to 48 hours," say sources

SPORTS DESK

DUBAI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) has instructed the participants of the meeting including Pakistan and India to come up with a solution regarding the fate of the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy after the neighbouring country announced that it will not travel to the host nation. Sources told Geo News that the crucial ICC board meeting, held virtually, spanned just around 15 minutes and was attended by officials from the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). During the meeting, the parties tabled their proposals regarding the holding of the prestigious tournament, with the board instructing the parties to find a solution with "mutual consultation". The sources added that both cricket boards would find an option "acceptable to all" with the assistance of the ICC.

"A logical option will be explored for the Champions Trophy in the next 24 to 48 hours," they said, adding that the boards will give their final opinion after consulting their respective governments. The decision comes amid ongoing disagreements between Pakistan and India. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has strongly opposed a hybrid model where matches against India will be played at a neutral venue. The PCB has communicated its firm stance to the ICC, with Chairman Mohsin Naqvi saying: "We will endure setbacks, but not at the cost of our dignity." The PCB has reportedly finalised most of the arrangements for hosting the event and has demanded an acceptable solution ahead of the ICC meeting. However, India's refusal to play in Pakistan continues to create hurdles, leaving broadcasters concerned about potential financial losses. The International Cricket Council (ICC) has postponed its board meeting to decide the fate of the

2025 Champions Trophy, with discussions failing to reach a conclusion. The meeting has been rescheduled for tomorrow for further deliberation. During today's session, Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi reiterated Pakistan's stance against the proposed hybrid model for the tournament. Naqvi emphasised that Pakistan is committed to hosting all matches on home soil, rejecting any alternative arrangements. Representatives from India presented their position, stating that the Indian government has not granted permission for the national cricket team to travel to Pakistan, which remains a point of contention between the two cricketing nations. The deadlock between Pakistan and India continues, with ICC officials announcing that board members will reconvene tomorrow in an attempt to break the impasse. If no agreement is reached, the ICC may resort to a voting process to determine the future of the tour-

nament. PCB chair Naqvi, while addressing a press conference here at Gaddafi Stadium in the wee hours of Thursday, asserted that the cricket board would do what's in the best interest of Pakistan cricket before emphasizing the need of reciprocity in cricketing ties between Pakistan and India. "Our stance is very clear," Naqvi stated. "I promise we'll do what is best for Pakistan cricket. I'm constantly in touch with the ICC chairman, and my team is talking to them constantly. We're still clear in our stance that it's not acceptable that we play cricket in India, and they don't play cricket here. Whatever will happen, will happen on the basis of equality. We've told the ICC very clearly, and what happens next we'll let you know." "Whatever we do, we will make sure the best outcome for Pakistan is achieved. But I repeat, and I am sure you know what I mean, it's not possible that Pakistan play in India, and they don't come here." The PCB

chairman further commented on the impending appointment of Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) secretary Jay Shah as the ICC chairman and expressed his hope that the latter would prioritize the benefit of the apex body after assuming the role. "(Jay Shah) takes charge in December, and I'm sure once he moves from the BCCI to the ICC, he will think about the ICC's benefit, and that's what he should do. Whenever anyone assumes such a role, he should only consider the interests of that organisation," Mohsin Naqvi said. It is pertinent to mention here that the Champions Trophy 2025 is at a standstill following the BCCI's refusal to send its team to Pakistan and stubbornness of holding the event under a hybrid model. The PCB is firm on its stance of opposing the hybrid model and also on boycotting all of India's matches if the BCCI does not send its national men's team to the country, which further delayed the announcement of the schedule.

DPM Dar to visit Iran on Monday

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reiterate Pakistan's concerns over hostilities in the Middle East, endangering the regional peace and security. He will sign the Charter for ECO Clean Energy Center. The Deputy Prime Minister will also hold meetings with participating ministers and other dignitaries on the sidelines of the ministerial meeting.

Petrol, diesel prices may rise

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As per the working based on 12 days of the current fortnight, the surge in the price of petrol by Rs3 per litre has been worked out and it may settle at a new price of Rs251.38 per litre from the existing price of Rs248.38 per litre. Likewise, the diesel price has also been estimated to increase by Rs2.87 per litre, from Rs255.14 to Rs258.01 per litre. Nevertheless, the kerosene oil price is projected to decline by Re0.11 per litre to Rs165.49 from the existing Rs165.60 per litre. The price of LDO (light diesel oil) is likely to tumble by Re0.04 per litre to Rs152.17 from Rs152.21 per litre. In the previous fortnightly review, the federal government maintained the prices of petrol and high-speed diesel (HSD) based on the price trends in the international market.

Hafiz Naem demands...

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that on November 26, an authoritarian approach was adopted in Islamabad, causing widespread anger among the people. He questioned under which law, constitution, or regulations the government acted in such a manner. He emphasized that although the government follows Form 47, a democratic system and the constitution, which guarantees human rights and political freedoms, still exist. He added that every political activist has the right to raise their voice and that every political party has the right to hold protests and demonstrations. However, he criticized the ruling class for attempting to turn the entire country into a no-go area for political activists and using violence, including shooting at protesters. He condemned the use of shelling, baton charges, and even shooting, saying these actions were meant to instill fear and were unacceptable. He called for the immediate resignation of the Interior Minister, Mohsin Naqvi, stating that there was no justification for his position if he failed to protect human lives and was involved in these actions.

Rebel groups launch...

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weeks of low-simmering violence. Russian and Syrian warplanes bombed rebel-held areas northwest Syria near the border with Turkey on Thursday to try to push back the offensive that had captured territory for the first time in years, Syrian army and rebel sources said. Reporting from Hatay, Turkey, Al Jazeera's Sinem Koseoglu said that opposition sources say they have seized control of more than 47 villages. "They have taken control of the countryside of Western Aleppo. But of course, they are close to the city centre of Aleppo... Also the opposition factions took control of the M5 highway which is a very strong logistics and military transfer route," she said. "Given the situation in southern Lebanon, the opposition saw an opportunity to gain back these places from the Syrian government," she added. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said "more than 14,000 people - nearly half are children - have been displaced" by the violence. Aleppo resident Sarmad, 51, told AFP he could hear "the sounds of missiles and artillery shelling around the clock".

Brook's unbeaten ton puts England in control against NZ
England are still 29 runs behind New Zealand

WEB DESK

CHRISTCHURCH: Harry Brook scored an unbeaten century to lift England to 319/5 on the second day of the first Test against New Zealand here at Hagley Oval on Friday. England had a contrasting start to their innings as opener Zak Crawley (0), debutant Jacob Bethell (10) and ace batter Joe Root (0) fell cheaply. The touring side were in heaps of trouble, having been reduced to 71/4 in the second session before a batting 151-run partnership between Brook and Ollie Pope significantly reduced the deficit. The duo was supported by uncharacteristic fielding from the home side until Glenn Phillips pulled off a sensational catch off Tim South-ee to draw curtains on Pope's anchoring knock. The right-handed batter, forced to bat down the order as an emergency wicketkeeper batter, scored 77 off 98 deliveries with the help of eight boundaries. "Obviously, very pleased to put together a partnership with Harry Brook out there," said Pope. "They bowled really well early, some pretty good balls in there... so from where we were to where we're finishing the day, the boys are really happy with what's

on the scoreboard. "Should be a good day tomorrow to hopefully push a button in the morning and put them under some pressure." Harry Brook was then joined by skipper Ben Stokes and the duo batted sensibly to push England past the 300-run mark without further damage. At the close of play, Brook was unbeaten on 132 off 162 deliveries, studded with a dozen boundaries including two sixes, while Stokes had made 37 not out. Brook and Stokes will resume England's first innings from 319/5 with a 29-run deficit. Debutant all-rounder Nathan Smith bagged two wickets for New Zealand, while South-ee, Matthew Henry and Will O'Rourke made one scalp apiece. Earlier on day two, New Zealand resumed their first innings from 319/8 through Phillips and South-ee. The home side, however, could add 29 runs to their total as South-ee and O'Rourke were quickly removed by Brydon Carse, leaving Phillips stranded on an unbeaten 58 off 87 deliveries. Carse and Shoab Bashir were the standout bowlers for England, picking up four wickets each, while Gus Atkinson bagged two.

Pak confirm squad for World Team Squash c'ship

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Former world junior champion Hamza Khan and young Ashab Irfan were excluded from the four-member squad which the Pakistan Squash Federation announced on Tuesday for the World Team Squash Championship, set to take place in Hong Kong from December 9 to 15. According to Air Commander (r) Amir Nawaz, the secretary general of the Pakistan Squash Federation, the team will feature Nasir Iqbal, Asim Khan, Noor Zaman, and Abdullah Nawaz. However, Tayyab Aslam's name was also probable for the tournament, but he, too, wasn't picked in the final squad. Asim and Noor are recently competing in the Professional Squash Association (PSA) Cape Town Open. Notably, Asim advanced to the quarter-finals of the Cape Town Open after defeating Egypt's Seif El Shenawy in the second round here on Wednesday. Sixth seeded Asim secured a commanding 3-1 victory with game scores of 11-4, 3-11, 11-9, and 11-5. Meanwhile, the World Squash Federation has also released the tournament draw, which divides 26 participating teams into eight groups. Pakistan has been placed in Group H, alongside host Hong Kong, Peru, and Italy.

Max Verstappen 'should start doing comedy': Lando Norris

LONDON: Lando Norris says Max Verstappen "should start doing comedy" after the Dutchman suggested he could have won the world title in Norris' McLaren. The Red Bull driver's remarks are based on his belief that the McLaren was the faster car for much of the season. "He can say whatever he wants. Of course I completely disagree, as I would," Norris said. "He's good, but yeah. It's not true. I know what Max is capable of doing and I like his confidence but I can say whatever. Not possible." Verstappen said after last weekend's Las Vegas Grand Prix, where he won the title, that he would have wrapped it up sooner if he were driving for McLaren, and that it would have been "pretty much the same" in a Ferrari. Norris said that he had "maybe made too many mistakes" this year. And he acknowledged that the McLaren had been faster for more than half the season. But he pointed out that Verstappen had built a huge lead when the Red Bull was dominating early on, when Verstappen won four of the first five races at a time when the McLaren was considerably slower than the Red Bull. "For the majority of the season we've had a better car than Red Bull but when I've been winning he was second, third, when he was winning, I was fifth, sixth," Norris said. "I don't think we could have or deserved to win the title as a driver, but I'm confident that for the first time in my career we will go into a year with the thought of challenging for the title. We didn't expect it this year." In the first five races of the year, the Red Bull was on average 0.45 seconds a lap faster than the McLaren in qualifying. And over the first half of the season, it was 0.23secs faster. McLaren have turned the tables in the second half of the season, in which their car has qualified on average 0.12secs faster than the Red Bull. However, Verstappen's average qualifying position over the year is 2.5 compared to Norris' 3.7. Norris has also had to compete with team-mate Oscar Piastri, who has taken two wins to Norris' three, while Verstappen has dominated the other Red Bull driver, Sergio Perez. "He has to do all of his work on his own, which is hats off to him," Norris said. "He doesn't have someone who is pushing him. He doesn't have someone who's trying other things with the car. The data's not as valuable when you don't have someone who's performing at the same level. There's a lot of things that Max can do that are phenomenal. Driving at the level he does consistently without a team-mate that can push him in any way certainly makes his life harder. - Agencies

Iga Swiatek accepts one-month suspension
Swiatek tested positive in an out-of-competition sample in August

WARSAW: World number two and five-times Grand Slam champion Iga Swiatek has accepted a one-month suspension after testing positive for banned substance trimetazidine (TMZ), the International Tennis Integrity Agency said on Thursday. Swiatek tested positive in an out-of-competition sample in August but the ITIA, which runs tennis's anti-doping programme, accepted that it was caused by contamination of her medication melatonin, which was manufactured and sold over the counter in her native Poland. Swiatek said she had been taking it for jet lag and sleep issues and as there was no significant fault or negligence, the ITIA ruled it was "the lowest end of the range" and offered the reigning French Open champion a one-month suspension which the 23-year-old accepted. "The player was provisionally suspended from Sept. 12 until Oct. 4, missing three tournaments, which

counts towards the sanction, leaving eight days remaining," the ITIA said in a statement. "She also forfeited prize money from the Cincinnati Open, the tournament directly following the test. Swiatek, who had pulled out of tournaments in Asia in September citing personal matters and fatigue, described the ordeal of testing positive as the "worst experience of my life". She was world number one when she failed the test and having skipped the Asian swing, Aryna Sabalenka leapfrogged her in the world rankings to eventually end the year as number one. "In the last 2.5 months I was subject to strict ITIA proceedings, which confirmed my innocence," Swiatek said on Instagram. "The only positive doping test in my career, showing unbelievably low level of a banned substance I've never heard about before, put everything I've worked so hard for my entire life into

question. "Both me and my team had to deal with tremendous stress and anxiety. Now everything has been carefully explained, and with a clean slate I can go back to what I love most." Swiatek, whose anti-doping violation was not made public at the time, had her provisional suspension lifted after providing samples of her melatonin product to the WADA-accredited SMRTL laboratory in Salt Lake City which confirmed de-

tecting low doses of TMZ in both opened and sealed containers of the product. The provisional suspension was lifted on Oct. 4 and the case forwarded to an Independent Tribunal. Swiatek is not the first world number one to fail a doping test this year after Italy's Jannik Sinner, the men's top-ranked player, also tested positive for anabolic agent clostebol. However, Sinner was cleared of wrongdoing by an independent tribunal ahead of

the U.S. Open, which he went on to win. The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) has appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) against the tribunal's finding of "no fault or negligence". With two of the biggest names in tennis escaping lengthy bans for anti-doping violations, questions are being raised about the sport's reputation. Addressing the media on Thursday, ITIA chief executive Karen Moorhouse said: "These are not cases of intentional doping. We're dealing with inadvertent breaches of the rules. So I don't think this is a cause for concern for tennis fans. I think the fact that we're being clearly open, transparent, and it shows the breadth and depth of our anti-doping programme." Swiatek played in Cincinnati, where she was the top seed and reached the semi-finals. The WTA said she won nearly \$159,000 in prize money at the tournament won by Sabalenka. Iga Swiatek then took part

in the U.S. Open where she was knocked out in the quarter-finals before the WTA Finals in Riyadh where she failed to advance from the group stage. She also represented Poland at the Billie Jean King Cup where they lost in the semi-finals to eventual champions Italy. The women's tour (WTA) said they acknowledged the ITIA's decision and that they "fully support" Swiatek. "Iga has consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to fair play and upholding the principles of clean sport, and this unfortunate incident highlights the challenges athletes face in navigating the use of medications and supplements," the WTA said. Russian figure skater Kamila Valieva also tested positive for TMZ, with the result revealed during the 2022 Winter Olympics. She was disqualified from the team competition at the Beijing Games and was handed a four-year doping ban. - Agencies



Briefs

PSX stays bullish, gains 1,274 more points

ISLAMABAD: The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Friday, gaining 1,274.55 points more points, a positive change of 1.27 percent, closing at 101,357.32 points as compared to 100,082.77 points on the last trading day. Pakistan's cuisine A total of 915,509,804 shares were traded during the day as compared to 1,164,794,139 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 35.978 billion against Rs.39.776 billion on the last trading day. As many as 454 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 265 of them recorded gains and 137 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 52 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were Bank of Punjab with 95,056,818 shares at Rs 9.20 per share, K-Electric Limited with 55,535,090 shares at Rs 5.58 per share and Sui South Gas with 44,802,561 shares at Rs.28.30 per share. Services Industries Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.112.67 per share price, closing at Rs 1,349.36, whereas the runner-up was Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited with Rs 114.86 rise in its per share price to Rs 7,992.86. Excide Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 32.09 per share closing at Rs 839.22 followed by Nestle Pakistan Limited with Rs 13.20 decline to close at Rs6,570.67.—APP

Gold price surges by Rs 2,100 per tola

LAHORE: The price of gold in Pakistan surged by Rs. 2,100 to Rs. 277,300 per tola in line with global trends, maintaining a winning streak for a working day on Friday. Pakistan's cuisine According to the local Sarafa Association and All Pakistan Gems and Jewellers Association, the price of gold per tola in the country has reached Rs 277,300 after an increase of Rs 2,100, while the price of 10 grams of gold has increased by Rs 1,800, the price is Rs 237,470. On the other hand, the price of gold in the global market has increased by \$21 to \$2,661 per ounce.—APP

Gold prices up by Rs.2,100 per tola

ISLAMABAD :The price of 24 karat per tola gold increased by Rs 2,100 and was sold at Rs 277,300 on Friday against its sale at Rs 275,200, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also went up by Rs 1,800 to Rs 237,740 from Rs 235,940 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat gold increased to Rs 217,928 from Rs 216,278. The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs 3,400 and Rs 2,914.95, respectively.—APP

Borrell issues final warning EU has reached 'breaking point' in Ukraine

MADRID: In an interview before leaving office, Josep Borrell sounds the alarm about Russia's military superiority in its war of aggression in Ukraine and urges EU countries to "do more and quicker" to support Ukraine. "We don't have a sense of urgency." As his five-year mandate as the European Union's foreign policy chief comes to an end, Josep Borrell issues a final warning about the danger that Russia's expansionism poses for the entire bloc and calls, one last time, on member states to ramp up their military assistance and prevent Ukraine from succumbing to Vladimir Putin's control. "We've reached the breaking point. Now it's the moment when member states have to decide: we go and we support," Borrell said in an interview with a group of media, including Euronews, two days before the end of his tenure.—APP

Networking hi-tea with Pakistani stakeholders, friends of Malaysia

Call for further boosting Malaysia-Pakistan ties

The High Commission of Malaysia emphasized the immense potential for further collaboration, particularly in agriculture, the halal industry, and technology

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The High Commission of Malaysia hosted a Networking Hi-Tea with Pakistani stakeholders and Friends of Malaysia. The event aimed to expand the High Commission's network and foster closer ties between the two countries, focusing on trade, investment, and business collaboration. The event brought together members of the National Assembly, Senate, senior government officials, present and former military personnel, and the High Commission's Home-Based and Locally Recruited Staff. In his remarks, the High Commissioner emphasized the importance of Malaysia-Pakistan relations, highlighting key achievements from the recent state visit of Malaysia's Prime Minister to Pakistan. The visit saw agreements to boost trade, investment, and cultural exchange, with direct flights between Karachi and Kuala Lumpur increasing to seven per week starting December 2024. The High Commissioner also highlighted the strong bond between the two countries. He praised

Pakistan's beauty, resilience, and the warmth of its people, while expressing Malaysia's gratitude

for the contributions of the Pakistani diaspora to Malaysia's development. With over 200,000 Pakistanis living in Malaysia, their role in strengthening ties and fostering goodwill was invaluable. On economic opportu-

nities, the High Commissioner highlighted the USD1.4 billion trade volume in 2023 between

Malaysia and Pakistan. He emphasized the immense potential for further collaboration, particularly in agriculture, the halal industry, and technology. Malaysia's expertise in the halal sector was offered to help Pakistan become a region-



opportunities in Malaysia, especially with the country preparing to chair ASEAN in 2025. The High Commissioner also took the opportunity to highlight the atrocities faced by Palestinians, commended Pakistan's unwavering support, and reaf-

firmly Malaysia's commitment to advocating for justice on international platforms. Attendees had

the opportunity to network and explore ways to strengthen bilateral relations. The High Commission remains committed to facilitating cooperation that benefits both nations and builds a foundation for long-term partnership.

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UK intelligence chief accuses Russia of 'staggeringly reckless' sabotage campaign

In July, one caught fire at a courier hub in Germany, while another ignited in an English warehouse

LONDON: Hybrid attacks on Ukraine's Western allies appear to be proliferating, and several high-profile incidents have been blamed on the Kremlin. The head of Britain's foreign intelligence service, MI6, has said Russia is conducting a "staggeringly reckless" sabotage campaign against Ukraine's Western allies — and that his agents are working to stop it from spiralling out of control. In a speech to diplomats and intelligence officials in France, Richard Moore said his agency and its French counterpart, the DGSE, are cooperating to prevent a dangerous escalation, explaining that they are "calibrating the risk and informing the decisions of our respective governments" in response to what he described as a "mix of bluster and aggression". "We have recently uncovered a staggeringly reckless campaign of Russian sabotage in Europe, even as Putin and his acolytes resort to nuclear sabre-rattling, to sow fear about the consequences of aiding Ukraine," Moore told his audience. "Such activity and rhetoric is dangerous and beyond irresponsible." Moore was speaking alongside DGSE chief Nicolas Lerner at an event marking 120 years of the Entente Cordiale, a pact between Britain and France that bound the age-old rivals together as military and diplomatic allies. Western security officials suspect that Russian intelligence is trying to destabilise Ukraine's allies with an array of disruptive tactics, among them disinformation, sabotage and arson. Moscow has been linked by Western governments to a number of nefarious plans and attacks, including an alleged plot to burn down Ukrainian-owned businesses in London, and to incendiary devices found in packages on cargo planes. In July, one caught fire at a courier hub in Germany, while another ignited in an English warehouse. Lerner agreed with Moore that "the collective security of the whole of Europe is at stake" in Ukraine. He said the UK's experience tackling Russia in the wake of attacks such as the 2018 Salisbury Novichok poisoning was invaluable to his own service as it seeks to defuse Russian actions. The UK and France are among Ukraine's closest European allies, and have proven especially willing to allow Kyiv to use weapons they supply — especially France's Scalp missile and the UK's Storm Shadow system — to strike targets inside Russia. The Biden administration has only recently eased its long-held opposition to US-made missiles being used to strike Russia.—APP

Gaza in anarchy, says UN

GENEVA: The Gaza Strip has descended into anarchy, with hunger soaring, looting rampant and rising numbers of rapes in shelters as public order falls apart, the United Nations said on Friday. Palestinians are suffering "on a scale that has to be seen to be truly grasped," Ajith Sunghay, head of the UN Human Rights Office in the Palestinian territories, said after concluding his latest visit to the devastated Palestinian territory. "This time I was particularly alarmed by the prevalence of hunger," Sunghay told a media briefing in Geneva, via video-link from Amman. "The breakdown of public order and safety is exacerbating the situation with rampant looting and fighting over scarce resources." "The anarchy in Gaza we warned about months ago is here," he said, calling the situation entirely predictable, foreseeable and preventable. Sunghay said young women, many displaced multiple times, had stressed the lack of any safe spaces or privacy in their makeshift tents. "Others said that cases of gender-based violence and rape, abuse of children and other violence within the community has increased in shelters as a consequence of the war and the breakdown of law enforcement and public order," he said. Sunghay described the situation in Gaza City as "horrendous," with thousands of displaced people sheltering in "inhumane conditions with severe food shortages and terrible sanitary conditions." He recounted seeing, for the first time, dozens of women and children in the besieged enclave now scavenging in giant landfills. The level of destruction in Gaza "just gets worse and worse," he added. "The common plea by everyone I met was for this to stop. To bring this to an end. Enough." He said the UN was being blocked from taking any aid to the 70,000 people still thought to be living in north-east Gaza, due to "repeated impediments or rejections of humanitarian convoys by the Israeli authorities." "It is so obvious that massive humanitarian aid needs to come in — and it is not.—APP

Musadik held fruitful discussions with energy leaders at WIC

Other panelists included Mr Daler Juma, Minister of Energy and water resources of Tajikistan. Ms Sujatha, Vice president global partnerships and net zero, Invest India, Mr Omar Aldaweesh, CEO EDF Saudia and Bahrian

DNA

RIYADH: Federal Minister for Petroleum and water resources Dr Musadik Malik attended the 28th World Investment Conference (WIC)2024 in Riyadh where he held fruitful discussions with energy leaders of the world. During a panel session titled Diversifying Energy Sources - Accelerating FDI in Energy and Minerals Projects, Dr Musadik Malik highlighted the policy initiatives of Government of Pakistan to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in energy, renewables and mining. Other panelists included Mr Daler Juma, Minister of Energy and water re-



sources of Tajikistan. Ms Sujatha, Vice president

global partnerships and net zero, Invest India, Mr

Omar Aldaweesh, CEO

EDF Saudia and Bahrian.

Pak showcases exquisite craftsmanship at Banan Handicrafts Week

DNA

RIYADH: The Embassy of Pakistan in Riyadh proudly facilitated the participation of renowned Pakistani artisans from Behbud Foundation, Karvaan Crafts, Orah Jewels, and Multani camel skin crafts at the 2nd Banan International Handicrafts Week. Pakistan's cuisine. The event, held from November 23-30, 2024, was organized under the auspices of the Heritage Commission of the Saudi Ministry of Culture. The Pakistani pavilion at Banan stood as a testament to the country's rich cultural heritage and the unparalleled quality of its craftsmanship. From intricate handmade designs to traditional artistry passed down through generations, the showcased crafts highlighted the deep-rooted legacy of Pakistan's artisan community. Promoting Pakistan's cultural heritage and



showcasing the remarkable skill of our craftsmen is a core priority for the Embassy. The vibrant participation at Banan International Handicrafts Week reflects Pakistan's commitment to fostering cultural exchange and mutual appreciation of artistic traditions. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia share robust, strategic, and historic ties, which have grown even stronger under the framework of Saudi Vision 2030. This visionary initiative has further diversified bilateral relations, enhancing economic, cultural, and people-to-people exchanges. The delegation's participation in Banan exemplifies the deepening of these bonds, with cultural initiatives like these playing a vital role in strengthening the friendship between the two nations. The Embassy of Pakistan remains committed to nurturing such exchanges to further enhance mutual understanding and cooperation. -

Chinese small hydropower tech helps alleviate poverty in Pakistan

BEIJING: "China-Pakistan Belt and Road Joint Laboratory on Small Hydropower Technology: Collaborative Efforts to Alleviate Poverty in Pakistan" by Ministry of Water Resources of China and National Research Institute for Rural Electrification of the Ministry of Water Resources of China recently won the Best Poverty Reduction Practice Award at the 2024 International Seminar on Global Poverty Reduction Partnerships in Beijing. Though boasting an abundance of hydropower resources, Pakistan is still facing issues such as power shortage and unstable grids because of lack of advanced technology for resource development and equipment manufacture. Pakistan's cuisine Inaugurated in 2015, China-Pakistan Belt and Road Joint Laboratory on Small Hydropower Technology has been easing local power shortage in Pakistan to improve people's livelihood and drive rural economic development through joint research, technology demonstration, application promotion and talent cultivation, achieving progress towards economic, social, and environmental sustainability.—APP

SBP injects Rs2.35t in the market

KARACHI :The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) injected Rs2350 billion in the market through reverse repo purchase and Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operation (OMO) on Friday. According to OMO results issued here, the SBP conducted Open Market Operation, Reverse Repo Purchase (Injection) on November 29, 2024 for 7-day and 28-day tenors and accepted an amount of Rs2100 billion offered through 15 bids. The central bank received 15 bids for 7-day tenor cumulatively offering an amount of Rs2417.4 billion at the rate of return ranging from 15.05 to 15.10 percent while no bid was received for the 28-day tenor. The central bank accepted an amount of Rs2100 billion offered through 15 bids for 7-day tenor at the 15.05% rate of return. Total amount offered at 15.05% was Rs705 billion, out of which SBP accepted Rs387.6 billion on pro-rata basis. Meanwhile, SBP also conducted Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operation for the 7-day and 28-day tenors and injected Rs250 billion in the market. The central bank received 5 bids for 7-day tenor quoting an amount of Rs327.1 billion at the rate of return ranging between 15.08 to 15.12 % while no bid was received for 28-day tenor. The SBP accepted Rs250 billion out of the total amount offered through 3 quotes for 7-day tenor at 15.08% rate of return. Total amount offered at 15.08% was Rs191 billion, out of which SBP accepted Rs113.9 billion on pro-rata basis.—APP

Syria militants, allies shell Aleppo in shock offensive

BEIRUT: Militants and their Turkish-backed allies shelled Syria's second city Aleppo on Friday, in a major offensive against government troops that has sparked some of the deadliest fighting the country has seen in years. The violence has killed 242 people, according to a Syrian war monitor, most of them combatants on both sides but also including civilians, including 24 dead, most of them in Russian air strikes. The offensive began at a sensitive time for Syria and the region, with a fragile ceasefire between Hezbollah and Israel taking effect earlier this week in neighboring Lebanon. Syria's civil war began when President Bashar Assad's forces cracked down in 2011 on pro-democracy protests. Since then, it has killed more than 500,000 people, displaced millions and battered the country's infrastructure and industry.—APP

Briefs

Authorities barred from arresting Marwat

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday restrained authorities from arresting Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Sher Afzal Marwat in any undisclosed cases. IHC judge Justice Arbab Tahir issued notices to the Ministry of Interior, the Inspector General of Police (IG) Islamabad, and the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), directing them to provide details of cases filed against Marwat in connection with the D-Chowk protest.

The court ordered that a comprehensive report be submitted by next Friday, while Marwat, accompanied by his legal team led by Bar Association President Riyasat Ali Azad and lawyer Osama Tariq who filed a petition seeking clarity on the cases registered against him. The hearing has been adjourned until next Friday. The PTI staged its "do-or-die" protest demonstration on November 24, which concluded abruptly on November 26 following a government crackdown on protesters. Sher Afzal Marwat, speaking on the matter, disclosed internal disagreements over the protest's direction, highlighting that PTI founder Imran Khan opposed a demonstration at Sangani, preferring D-Chowk despite reservations from key party leaders. According to Marwat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur opposed advancing beyond Chungi Number 26 in Islamabad and expressed concerns about heading toward D-Chowk.

LHC summons IG Punjab

DNA

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Friday summoned Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab, Dr. Usman Anwar, to appear in person at 3 pm for his response on the abduction of senior journalist Hafiz Shakir Awan. The court's order came after a request from a police official to delay providing a response regarding the incident. The hearing, led by Justice Tariq Saleem Sheikh, was held in response to a habeas corpus petition filed by Shahnaz Begum, the mother of the missing journalist. Begum's petition sought the recovery of her son, who was allegedly abducted from his home in Nishat Colony Cantt, Lahore, on November 28, 2024. The petition also called for proceedings against the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and Punjab Police for their alleged unlawful actions, including harassment, assault, and illegal detention. During the proceedings, a police official appeared before the court and claimed that Shakir Awan was not in police custody but requested more time to trace his whereabouts. In response, President of the Courts Journalist Association, Muhammad Ashfaq, called for the immediate summoning of the IGP to clarify the situation.



ISLAMABAD: Workers loading clay on a tractor trolley during cleared D-chowk road after being closed for about 5 days due to the PTI protest in the Federal Capital. - Online

Foreigners advised to stay away from political protests

Pakistan committed to pursue good ties with all countries: FO

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistani Foreign Office has clarified that foreign nationals are prohibited from participating in political gatherings in Pakistan, emphasizing that such actions are illegal. Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch made the statement during a media briefing, stressing that the Pakistani government has no ongoing negotiations with the banned Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). She further noted that talks with the TTP would be contrary to the interests of the thousands of families affected by the group's violence. Baloch reiterated Pakistan's commitment

to maintaining friendly relations with all neighboring countries, pointing out that strengthening ties with one country does not imply deteriorating relations with others. When questioned about Israeli remarks on Iran's nuclear capabilities, she declined to comment, stating that Pakistan condemns the genocide in Gaza and supports Lebanon's sovereignty, welcoming the ceasefire agreement there. The spokesperson also addressed the issue of Afghan nationals who were detained during protests, confirming that the Ministry of Interior had arrested foreign nationals, including Afghan citizens. She reiterated that foreign involvement in Pakistan's political affairs is strictly illegal and urged all foreigners to refrain from en-

gaging in the country's political matters. The Ministry of Interior is expected to release details of the detained Afghan nationals. Additionally, Baloch confirmed that there are no travel restrictions on Pakistanis visiting the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and noted that the number of Pakistani prisoners in the UAE remains unclear. She also shared that agreements covering economy, connectivity, business, and customs were signed during the recent visit of Belarusian President. Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar is set to visit Iran on December 2-3, where discussions will focus on enhancing cooperation under the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) framework and the signing of the ECO Clean Energy Charter.

She said, Last week, four Kashmiri civilians were subjected to severe torture at an Indian Army Camp in Chas area of Mughal Maidan, Kishtwar in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Causing significant outrage across IIOJK, the incident is the latest in a series of similar abuses spread over the last several decades. We express grave concern over this disturbing incident, and demand that the perpetrators of the custodial torture are held accountable. Pakistan will continue to extend political, diplomatic, and moral support to our Kashmiri brothers and sisters for the just and peaceful settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolutions.

COAS reviews Pak-China joint exercise in Pabbi

General Asim Munir appreciated the professionalism and high morale of participants



STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir visited National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC), Pabbi, on Friday and interacted with the participants of joint exercise "Warrior-VIII" between Pakistan Army and Peoples' Liberation Army of China, said ISPR. COAS was briefed on the scope and conduct of the exercise. He appreciated the professionalism and high morale of participants being displayed during the joint exercise. Earlier upon arrival at NCTC Pabbi, COAS was received by Rawalpindi Corps Commander. Pakistan Army and China Peoples Liberation Army (CPLA) on Friday jointly conducted eighth annual anti-terrorism Warrior-8 Exercise.

This is the eighth exercise conducted by Pakistan and CPLA annually while preparation of this Exercise was started from last month in China. This exercise will be concluded in three weeks. Smartly contingents of Chinese Peoples Liberation Army were arrived in Pakistan on November 18, 2024 to participate in annual Warrior-8 Exercise. Inauguration ceremony was held in National Counter Terrorism Centre Pabbi on November 21, 2024 where latest weapons and individual and team-level training attracted general public. Defence officials of both brotherly neighboring countries agreed on basic planning of this exercise. This exercise will pave way for strengthening professional training and strategic ties between the two neighboring countries. Different training about clearance operation, gun fire, drone training, sniper training and company-level training was part of this Exercise.

Protesters clash with police after Georgia suspends EU bid

TBILISI: Riot police in Georgia used pepper spray and water cannon against protesters who turned out on the streets of Tbilisi after the government suspended moves to join the European Union. Forty-three people were arrested at the demonstrations in the capital on Thursday night, the government said. Crowds turned out after Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze said his government would drop its pursuit of EU membership "until the end of 2028" - a move criticised by more than 100 diplomats on Friday as "unconstitutional". Kobakhidze had accused the bloc of "blackmail" after EU legislators called for last month's parliamentary elections in Georgia to be re-run. They cited "significant irregularities". Since 2012, Georgia has been governed by Georgian Dream, a party which critics say has tried to move the country away from the EU and closer to Russia. The party claimed victory in last month's election but opposition MPs are boycotting the new parliament, alleging fraud, while the country's President Salome Zurbishvili, has called the one-party parliament "unconstitutional". On Thursday, the European Parliament backed a resolution describing the election as the latest stage in Georgia's "worsening democratic crisis" and saying that the ruling party was "fully responsible". - Agencies

KSA, Pak in talks on refinery upgrades

This forward-looking approach ensures that both nations are not just reacting to immediate energy challenges but are proactively planning for the long term

FOREIGN DESK

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia is set to deepen its strategic partnership with Pakistan through talks on refinery upgrades and a greenfield project for petroleum products, according to an official. Speaking to foreign media on the sidelines of the World Investment Conference held in Riyadh, Musadik Malik, senator and minister of state for petroleum of Pakistan, noted that the collaboration extends beyond energy projects and includes an agreement to connect power grids between the two nations. "We are working very closely with the Kingdom to figure out how, what are the future energy needs, particularly in the area of renewables, and jointly, we're going to identify and scope the opportunity, and jointly we're going to build a program to fulfill those needs," Malik said. He continued, "We have two different projects which are right now under, to say, research. One is the upgradation of quantifier refineries, and the other is a large greenfield

refinery which would not only produce petroleum products but also hydrocarbons. These are under research and negotiation, so these are not finalized." Malik highlighted that the partnership goes beyond just securing investments or transferring advanced technology. Instead, it involves a joint effort to carefully analyze Pakistan's future energy needs and map out potential scenarios for how these demands might evolve over time. This forward-looking approach ensures that both nations are not just reacting to immediate energy challenges but are proactively planning for the long term. By working together to address these evolving requirements, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan aim to guarantee Pakistan's energy security, creating a sustainable and reliable framework that supports the country's growth and development. Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are making significant strides in strengthening private-sector collaborations, with multiple agreements already yielding tangible results. Malik highlighted the proactive approach both nations are taking to foster business-to-business

partnerships. "Our prime minister believes that the government should not be in the business of doing business but should facilitate it," he said, emphasizing the central theme of the collaboration. "A very large part of the concept we are jointly building on is the private sector of the Kingdom working with the private sector of Pakistan." The minister added that around \$2.8 billion worth of memorandums of understanding have been signed between the two countries in October. "Out of these 28 to 30 MOUs, seven or eight have already been converted into contracts and executed within just three to four months," Malik said. He continued, explaining the momentum of the partnership: "We have transacted significant deals, and contracts are in motion. Yesterday (Nov. 25), during a roadshow with the Kingdom's private sector, we secured a non-disclosure agreement that could pave the way for a \$1.8 billion investment." Malik emphasized the multifaceted nature of Saudi Arabia's involvement in Pakistan, describing it as a "360-degree view" encompassing both public and private sectors. "We are not only receiving investments and technology but also collaborating on long-term strategies to meet Pakistan's growing energy demands," he said. "The Kingdom's Public Investment Fund and subsidiaries are actively identifying opportunities for mutual growth."

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